

Oliver Stone & Abby Martin: Down the JFK Rabbit Hole

This transcript may not be 100% accurate due to audio quality or other factors.

Abby Martin (AB): Oliver Stone is one of the most acclaimed filmmakers of our generation. In 1991, Stone released the cinematic feature JFK, which dismantled the government's official story of the Kennedy assassination. The enormous public reception led to a major piece of legislation, the JFK Records Act of 1993. Through the release of these files researchers have been able to piece together more of the story, which only raises more questions. This is the subject of Oliver Stone, and James DiEugenio new documentary film called JFK Revisited Through the Looking Glass.

Speaker 1 in Video: ...the flash apparently official: President Kennedy died some 38 minutes ago. There is a suspect, 24 year old Lee H. Oswald, who actually fired the shots that killed Kennedy. Was there a conspiracy?

AB: I sat down with Oliver Stone to talk about his JFK films, the historical significance of the JFK assassination and American foreign policy today. This episode was filmed for a special joint production with Aaron Goods American Exception podcast.

AB: Oliver, thank you so much for sitting down with me today.

Oliver Stone (OS): Well, it's an honour too for me.

AB: Your entire filmmaking career has always hit on extremely important political issues. You've chosen to do two films about the JFK assassination. Why does JFK have the same political importance as these other topics?

OS: I don't consider myself that documentary filmmaker that, let's say Emil de Antonio used to be back in the old days, you know, serious documentarian. No, I've stumbled onto these

things. I had to grow because I started- my father was a conservative. I grew up that way. So it took me time to figure out my path in this world. Obviously, the Vietnam War had a lot to do with it, but, you know, learning things as I went, so I was hardly where I am now, where I was when I started. So it's been growth in all these things, I have to say. It's really important to understand that. I didn't really start doing documentaries until 2001, when I did the Castro documentary. Before 2000, I was doing features, and I still love features, but not always. And also, they're more complicated and more expensive to make. Documentaries allow you to speak more directly to the issue. So that said, the JFK case came up in 1989 when I was making *Born on the Fourth of July* and I met a very interesting woman called Ellen Ray, who ran Sheridan Square Press. She had known Jim Garrison very well and had been at the trial. She'd been a big supporter of the trial back in New Orleans in '69, and gave me this book that Jim had written called *On The Trail of the Assassins*, and it was about his journey into this case in New Orleans. He was a prosecutor, the district attorney of New Orleans Parish. I wasn't really knowledgeable about the case until I read the book and then started to do some research. I met with Jim, which was quite interesting. He opened up a whole world to me, and then I met with Fletcher Prouty, who had been an Air Force officer, and had been working with the CIA for many years since World War Two. So then from there it was down the rabbit hole, read the book, optioned it, made my boy *The Fourth of July*, very interested, and went back to New Orleans, started doing more and more reading and read a lot. And I said, This is a great idea. This is a movie. This is like a chance to do- one of my favourites was *Z* by Costa-Gavras in France, and he was a great filmmaker, it's about the Greek coup d'etat of the 60s. And I say we can do it somewhat like that. It would be a revelation. You would start with Dealey Plaza. You see the surface of events like it was reported. The conventional approach. And then as you dug deeper, it becomes deconstructed. And that was the perfect movie for me. It was like, I'm peeling an onion. But this is a much larger story, and I was saying I started on a smaller level. This was about a New Orleans story, a prosecutor, the only prosecutor in the United States who brought charges in the Kennedy case. It's very important because it established at least a beginning of something

Speaker 2 in Video: On March 1st, 1967. The first arrest has been made in the investigation of the New Orleans District Attorney's Office into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Arrested this evening in the District Attorney's Office was Clay Shaw. Mr Shaw will be charged with participating in a conspiracy to murder John F. Kennedy.

OS: You know, assassination sometimes is limited in its political scope. But there was a much bigger story here, and Garrison knew it and found out about it. And that's where we wrote the scene where he meets Donald Sutherland in Washington, D.C. Sutherland is based basically on Prouty, who tells them the story of his experience and what he thinks happened that day. And it was definitely, the president was removed for political reasons, very important political reasons because he's changing things. Which is not really evident to the American public at that time. Nor is it evident to Jim Garrison. This takes time. You have to study the history, you have to study what he was doing, he was destroying the foreign policy,

and that makes it a much bigger story and a much more interesting story. In the movie, Kevin Costner, who plays Jim Garrison, turns to Donald Sutherland, says, This is much bigger than I thought. I can't handle this. And it's true. He wasn't prepared to handle this case. Five different departments of the CIA were on Garrison. It's quite a story. They put informers into his office. They wiretapped him. All his subpoenas out of state were killed. I mean, there was quite a conspiracy against Garrison. They went after him and they completely ridiculed him. But he went ahead with the case. Grand jury believed him. Grand jury is serious. And the case, the trial fell apart in the sense that he didn't have enough evidence. But he proved certain things in the case, and that was very important, actually.

AB: I know that you followed the conventional wisdom about the JFK assassination until around 88. But as a young man, how did that impact you? I mean, politically, seeing the president of the United States assassinated, seeing RFK assassinated, and then this slue of political assassinations, I mean, that must have impacted you.

OS: In the 60s, we were all shocked. I mean, it was just shocking. That's all. We didn't make sense of it. Our leaders were cut down, but we didn't really put it all together. Nobody ran the dots between the lines, between John Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy. We didn't make the connections. Now I think we can make those connections because they're important to make. But then, no. I was just reacting like everyone else. And then of course, I went to Vietnam as a soldier, came back. I didn't even connect the Vietnam War to the death of Kennedy. That's very important. The narrative at the time was that Lyndon Johnson took power and continued the policies of Kennedy. That is nonsense, rubbish. That is absolutely not true. Except for civil rights Johnson completely changed every foreign policy in every country that Kennedy was working with. Kennedy was trying to change things, but we didn't know what Kennedy was up to because he was a charismatic president and spoke very well, but we really didn't know what was going on behind the scenes, you know? And I brought many of these issues up in the film. I brought up the Vietnam issue. I brought up the Cuba issue. I brought up the Russia issue. But I didn't deal with Africa. I didn't deal with Indonesia, I didn't deal with Latin America. There were a lot of other things that Kennedy was doing, which we found out in the course of making this JFK Revisited Through the Looking Glass.

AB: Well, it's been 30 years since you released JFK. It was a huge commercial and critical success. People were hungry for the truth, clearly. They wanted something like this. They wanted an entry point to know that this was the alternative narrative that made sense. There was a deep distrust of the mainstream narrative. But despite this amazing reception, there were papers like The Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, months prior to the film's release they were already excoriating it in the press. How did your position change and the legacy media after JFK?

OS: Big question. I had no idea what I was getting into. I thought the case was over, at the beginning, I thought it was over and it was done with and that I was going into ancient

history here. And I was bringing up- they didn't make any sense. The Warren Commission was a fraud. It had a set scenario that, three bullets, one gunman and it had to stick to that story. It didn't make sense. It was completely illogical. And to this day, I am shocked that the American, the elite American, went with that story. Everybody was uneasy with that story. And that's the truth. People don't know that Lyndon Johnson himself said, Yeah, I don't believe the magic bullet theory. He had many doubts, but so did Robert Kennedy, Jackie Kennedy. Jackie Kennedy made a message to Khrushchev about, Don't think that this was a Russian agent that shot Kennedy. This was done by a right wing cabal in the United States of what they were saying. And other people, to call Charles de Gaulle, all these people were experienced in world affairs. They didn't buy that story. Neither did Nasser in Egypt. Sukarno in Indonesia. Castro in Cuba. Castro had almost been assassinated a dozen times more by the CIA. So he knew what was going on and knew that his plan for possible reconciliation with the United States was dead, dead in the water. Same was true about Nikita Khrushchev, the premier of Russia. He cried when he went to the American embassy to pay his respects because he knew that all the plans that they had for detente were dead in the water. Johnson was a return to the days of Eisenhower and Dulles and Truman. Please remember that Roosevelt was a big believer in détente, also with ease with Russia. He recognised Russia in 1933 when he became president. That was the first time the American government had recognised a communist country. And he got along with Stalin. He got along with them. And they had plans. People say, you know, Stalin was leading them along. No, Stalin genuinely liked Roosevelt because he could deal. They were both canny politicians. And after Roosevelt died so suddenly in 45, everything changed in American policy. Against Russia...

AB: Well, they must have been terrified that Kennedy was going to be another Roosevelt.

OS: That's right. But at that time, you see, now it's shocking. You say, Oh, it's impossible, it's impossible to believe there would be peace between Russia and the United States. This is after 60 years of this ridiculous foreign policy we have where we threaten inflation of Russia, China, Iran, you know, we build up our enemies. Why? Because of, frankly, financial reasons. It's a huge boondoggle to the Pentagon and the intelligence agencies.

AB: It must've been so frustrating to see the accolades that JFK received. Yet the corporate media?...

OS: Oh, that's just a disgusting story.

AB: Undermining the film's message in such a way.

OS: We found out as- later of course- that the CIA had people assets in the media, a lot more than we ever knew, or at that time. It only came out in the 70s and it continues to this day. They were planted and some of these newspapers, you have to think about who owns them, you know, some of them are owned by rich people. Rich media tends to bend towards the

government and are cooperating with the government. You have to wonder because of all the things that have happened and you're aware of it since the 1960s- some of these newspapers are assets in themselves, you know, like The Washington Post. I mean, some of the insane things that they've done and said... The New York Times itself, which used to be the fountain of so-called integrity, you have to have very serious doubts about, because The New York Times has supported every war America's been in, including Vietnam and Korea, and since then supported it and then eventually maybe moved away from it after it didn't work out so well. And we don't have a free media. That's what the conclusion is. The only media that seems free right now to me is open to the thought that Kennedy could have been killed by a conspiracy run by the government or the people working like you, who are working outside mainstream media. It really worries me. And the response to my film Revisited, JFK Revisited: total blackout. There's not one mention of it. They can't deal with the facts that we present in this documentary. The Warren Commission was run by, not run by but the major most influential member was Allen Dulles, who was the head of the CIA, had been and had been fired by Kennedy, and he was appointed by Johnson to the commission. And he supervised. He was at every meeting. He supervised it pretty closely, and he made sure that the CIA never revealed anything of importance to the commission.

AB: This reminds me of Henry Kissinger being appointed to head the 9/11 commission. I mean, it just doesn't make any sense.

OS: This is far worse. Kissinger never got there. The Dulles brothers always tended to go off on their own and do what they wanted to do. And under Eisenhower, they achieved a power and independence that was unbelievable. Eisenhower did not really supervise the CIA during those 50s, 1950s years, when that's when they grew powerful with the Iran coup, with a coup in Guatemala and also the secret attempts to remove Sukarno in Indonesia. But they were everywhere in the world. It's very hard to imagine. Go back, 1945 Roosevelt dies, right? This is a man who was trying to move towards a world situation. World peace after World War Two, four powers are going to run the world, basically, but the United Nations is going to be very important. This is 1945. By 1963, when Kennedy is killed, it's only like 18 years- 40, 45, 55, 63- 18 years of an interregnum where the national security state takes over. We didn't have that before. Of all through our history. All of a sudden, it's a new world from 45 to 63. Building up military weapons of war in peacetime, an army, keeping the nuclear mandate tightly under control to try to deny any other country the right to nuclear so that we'd be the kingpin, which we were. So by 1963, it's only been in business 18 years, this preparation for war state. National security. Everything is an emergency. This is what really basically happened. America all of a sudden was running the world and deciding who was who and who's boss. We are the bully and we got bigger and bigger. 63, it was all going to be over. He was going to go back to the Roosevelt way of doing business, which was a cooperative piece, as he said in his speech in 1963, three months before he died.

John Kennedy: What kind of a peace do I mean and what kind of a peace do we seek? Not a

Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war, not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on Earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and build a better life for their children. Not nearly peace for Americans, but peace for all men and women. Not merely peace in our time. But peace in all time. I speak of peace, therefore, as a necessary, rational and of rational man. I realise the pursuit of peace is not as dramatic as the pursuit of war and frequently, the words of the pursuers fall on deaf ears, but we have no more urgent task.

OS: He pays homage to the Russians, how many people they lost in World War Two. And he says they are like us. They have lost half their country. I mean, that was an enormous blow, World War Two, they won World War Two, basically, and they broke the German war machine. After that, Kennedy said, You know, we are all mortal. We love our children, we drink the same water, we breathe the same air. We are mortal. He understood that. That was a man of compassion because he'd been in war like Roosevelt. That's why I find him remarkable, like Roosevelt, in the sense that he understood war and the danger of war and he was no war lover. He'd been there. He constantly said, war is not inevitable. He used to say that. He was pushing peace. Now he disappears in 63. Johnson takes over, within a year we're sending combat troops, and he only had advisers there, combat troops to Vietnam. Within two years, 500000 troops are there. Johnson is into a war right away, and it's a miracle we didn't go to war with Cuba because that's what the Pentagon wanted.

AB: Set off just to change events...

OS: The reason Kennedy was killed, basically, I'm just jumping around here, but the reason I believe that he was killed was that he refused to go to war twice in Cuba. That's really the reason. People say that it was Vietnam. No, Vietnam was still out there. The problem was that Kennedy inherited Berlin, the Berlin situation, the Wall. He built the wall. He said the Wall is better than a war.

Speaker 3 in Video: At this moment in Guatemala, a Cuban exile army is being created by the CIA. A Cuban exile air force with B-26 bombers. They are the instruments with which the CIA plans to overthrow Fidel Castro. In less than 72 hours Castro has destroyed the brigade. The American planned, trained and backed invasion of Cuba is now a total failure.

OS: In Cuba, Bay of Pigs, he did not back. Dulles was counting on him, sending troops to support the invasion because they had been pinned down on the beach. So he expected, like Eisenhower would do, that Kennedy would come in. Kennedy said no, and he told them in advance he wouldn't do it. It was just a botched invasion. Ridiculous. He said he didn't want any Americans getting into Cuba and then we'd be considered the bad guy again. He was very aware of that. He wanted a new regime. He wanted a clean slate, with America is no longer what you think it is. We're not going to go around overthrowing regimes, intervening in

countries, that's out. And he stuck to that and they hated him for it. They started to hate him for it. For the Cubans, especially.

AB: That's a big deal in the middle of the Cold War to make such statements.

OS: But then it gets an even bigger deal because in 1962, a year later, a year and a half later, we have the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 62. And again he gets maximum pressure from his Chief of Staff and from his military leaders and the CIA and from the older people around him. Let's call it the older statesman like Dean Acheson, who was Secretary of State. Even Eisenhower tells him to go into Cuba now. And I can understand that these people are thinking in World War Two terms, you know, like this we cannot allow communists to be off our shores. Kennedy says throughout this crisis, we are not invading. We are not attacking. We are going to try to solve this thing because otherwise it's going to lead to a major Armageddon and it will be Cuba, and then it will be Russia, and then it will be us in Berlin. And then it drew as big as we're going to go into China. Where the Pentagon had a plan...

AB: ... yes, plan to nuke China? I mean...

OS: All this came to being. This was Eisenhower plan. All this came into being in 1962, in October. Scary moment.

AB: Averting potential nuclear Armageddon. Staving off the military industrial complex that was pressuring him to add troops to Cuba, the Bay of Pigs, I mean that is a really important force that you are resisting.

OS: People don't understand that. Still they don't understand how close it came. I think that was his death warrant when he refused attacking Cuba in 62. He wouldn't do it. And they knew he wouldn't do it because he really stuck to his guts on that. That took a tremendous amount of courage on his part because he was alone there with his brother, Robert. And he didn't have much support. And his brother and him solve the case, with Khrushchev directly. Those two or both were responsible for saving basically the world from going to war. Both were removed within a year. Kennedy says if I won't go into Cuba, which is 90 miles away, why would I go into Vietnam, which is 6000 miles away? And he stuck to that logic basically throughout. And we in our documentary have gone back, and the Assassination Records Review Board has done more work, declassification of files, including a very important meeting in April of 63 when McNamara is in Hawaii. He tells the generals there that we are coming out of Vietnam, when basically win or lose, we have to go faster, he says. Now that's a very important point because people dispute that. And they say...

AB: Right, historians have disputed that after JFK came out, there was a lot of dissent saying that that was not true, but that was, you were vindicated later on with the documents. I mean this was proven.

OS: I know more and more about it because McNamara wrote a book about it after my film. We were coming out win or lose. McGeorge Bundy later on wrote another book, he was the national security adviser. He was a hawk. And he said Kennedy was pulling out. But, you know, I had a lot of advice from people like Fletcher Prouty that people who were involved in these decisions, and they were around the case- and I've talked to a lot of military people- they know what was going on and you can't hide that. This was a draft. It was written, prepared, everything, put out and then it was redrafted and then they wouldn't go with that redraft. That was when he was killed and Johnson put on another draft called 273, National Security Action Memorandum 273, and it changes the rules by which we are allowed to attack North Vietnam with our Air Force. And we did that, we led to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

AB: The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the fact that it was written up prior to even the alleged attack, I think really speaks volumes.

OS: We brought so much more evidence to this, but the truth is that it was Cuba, that was the reason he was killed. That was set in motion. The plot set it in motion. And Vietnam was an exacerbation of it, but he hadn't wanted to. He did the same thing in Laos in 1961. Eisenhower told go into Laos because there was a civil war brewing there. And he opted for a neutral solution. So he was not a warmonger. He was the contrary. And everywhere you look, with Nasser, he was trying to make a deal and he wanted the Middle East to cool out. Nasser loved him. Nasser loved him, he was the first American president, maybe I don't know about Roosevelt, but basically to reach out to the Arabs. And say the Palestinians, for example, in the homeland of Palestine, he wanted the Palestinians to have, maybe he was being an idealist, but he wanted the Palestinians to have a choice, whether they want to be repatriated to their homeland or whether they want to be relocated abroad. As you know, Israel was building up at that time. Ben-Gurion was their prime minister, and they were starting to build up a nuclear, their atomic bomb, and they started building one. He heard about it, and he was very adamant about it. He told Ben-Gurion twice I believe, not to do this, to stop. Otherwise he was going to cut off all the aid. He was very serious. Ben-Gurion was shocked. No American president had ever done this with them. They had gotten what they wanted from the beginning with Truman and Eisenhower. So what happened? Kennedy cut off any help, technical help we were giving. But then when he was killed, it stopped, and Johnson not only continued giving them what they wanted, and they built themselves up into an atomic power by 1967, when they actually came online as a nuclear power Johnson didn't even reveal it to the American public. He buried it. He didn't want that story, and...

AB: It's still buried today.

OS: So we never heard about it until years later if you remember correctly.

AB: They don't even admit it.

OS: When did Israel get this bomb?! You know, we never really know.

AB: You know, JFK had the unique distinction, of course, of having a real historical impact leading to the JFK Records Act. I think it was the first time that a film has ever led to actual legislation. It's very cool to see you actually testifying at Congress.

OS in Congress: The American people were tired of the possibility of war, scared of it. It was better to keep this in the closet and find Oswald to be the lone assassin and let the story end there. And I think that President Johnson not only told this to justice Warren, I think he used this very palpable excuse in talking not only to justice Warren, but to the major newspapers of the time because it was an appalling lack of investigation on the part of the The New York Times, The Washington Post, Time magazine and Newsweek magazine, and CBS News and NBC News to investigate this matter.

Re. Ray Thornton in Video: The answer is to adopt H. J. Res. 454 and to allow the American people full access to all of the information concerning this tragic event. I do want to commend you, Mr. Stone, for bringing the problem to the attention of the American people.

AB: Did you have any inkling that it would result in such a real life impact?

OS: You have to understand I was younger and sometimes you don't wake up to everything that's going on. I mean, I was over my head in the sense that I was being attacked left and right. So it took guts to go there, and to Congress, because I knew they hated me for causing this stir. But at the same time, they had to answer to the public by saying, OK, we deal with this nutcase, we're going to do this investigation and then he'll go away. But it didn't go away because a lot of researchers were around me, and they're the guys who did the work, not me. I'm not a researcher. They were going through the documents that were coming out, and they went through all these documents, they put out I forgot how many documents, I think they got 60000.

AB: Jesus, and they were trying to keep them until 2039, 75 years.

OS: Well, that was originally. The reason, at the end of our film we put a tag saying, when you can see these files from the House Select Assassinations Committee- that was the second investigation, the second serious one, HSCA that was done in 1978, and it was a serious investigation that was derailed. It's a fascinating story. I don't want to go into too much detail, but a lot of what they did was classified. They came to the conclusion that there had been a conspiracy. Basically they came to that conclusion, but it was buried in the files that we were never to see until 2039. So that was what we put in as a tag, not expecting any results because

there had been no results for years. The government stonewalled the whole thing. Sure enough, that got a lot of attention, and it continued, so we threw out all these hooks and that was one of the hooks that stuck. And over the years, the assassination community went through these documents, and there's a lot there never reported. The media didn't report it correctly. The Northwoods operation was reported. There was the only thing I think that came out in the media, one of the few things. But you know, it's hard, you need to be paying attention to the details. You have to be Sherlock Holmes here. You get a lot of little details. It's the aggregation of the details that make a difference in a murder case. Sherlock would have understood that, and all these things elements come together to explain the assassination. It's not simple, but you can do it and you can follow it, and they followed those documents. And that's what we put in the movie. Our movie is a result of those documents, and that's why you have to pay attention to it.

AB: These documents are still out. There are a lot of them. Trump was pledging to release them. He kicked the can down to Biden, and Biden blamed COVID and said that, quote, "Temporary continued postponement is necessary to protect against identifiable harm to the military, defends intelligence operations, law enforcement or the conduct of foreign relations that is of such gravity that it outweighs the public interest in immediate disclosure." Comment on Biden and Trump refusing to do this and also what it could mean about what's in the documents.

OS: Well, first of all, it's illegal what they did. It was supposed to all come out. I think it was 2017. That was when Trump was supposed to free up everything, and he claimed that he would. But he didn't because at the last second, he got pressure from somewhere, presumably the intelligence agencies and he closed it down. And it went on. He broke the law, basically. And then it went on. But that's OK. The intelligence agency break the law all the time, and they went on into 2018/ 19. And then when Biden came into office, who I thought might be a little more sympathetic to Kennedy because he's an Irish Catholic. But we didn't hear anything positive and he released some documents. I don't know what's in them, frankly, because that's going to take a little time, people are looking at them now. By the time they go through all these documents and scratch out everything or redact everything or else destroy everything...

AB: That's just what I was going to say, why would they have a problem destroying anything, since they've done this the whole time.

OS: The CIA has never cooperated with this investigation.

AB: Well, that is what is so fascinating about this, it is that the film is mostly based on the contradictions that have come out from the government's own documents. Right? This is based on the questions that have arisen from these documents. So it's like, how could you write this off? This is from the files.

OS: It's a mess. The case is a mess because it was always, you know, they went by the standards like they pulled off an assassination the way they do it in a foreign country, and they didn't think that they would be that big a deal. They wouldn't be tracked down by all these nutcases out there who are looking at every document. They didn't think that way.

AB: The Zapruder film had to play a role in...

OS: What?

AB: The Zapruder film really was contradicting what they said...

OS: That was another surprise, yeah. And that too has been concealed from the public for a long time until 1975, when it was on Geraldo Rivera show. Garrison got it out for the trial, which was amazing, by the way. That was against all plans. And who knows what they cut out of the film? I don't know. But basically, there was enough in the film for us to claim in our movie that his head went back into the...

AB: You just see it with your own eyes. I mean...

OS: ...back into the left- you don't have to be a genius to figure that out. The shot came from the front, the kill shot. And they've come off with every theory, including elephants dangling off the edge of a cliff. You know, you can prove anything in physics by saying, Oh, that's a neuromuscular reaction, this, that, blah blah blah. It ain't so. This is basic infantry stuff. He was killed from the front and from the rear, and there was more than three shots because the single bullet doesn't work at all as we tried to show, there was no chain of custody on it. The bullets all fucked up. The FBI lied about it repeatedly. Don't forget that they can't prove that that was the rifle. It was another rifle. There's no fingerprints on it at all. It goes right up to the FBI expert who says that there's nothing on it. That's a fact, you know, and then they send it back to Dallas, and all of a sudden it comes back with, Oh, there is a partial print. Who put that partial print on? I mean, that kind of shit happens. The eyewitnesses, what they saw, most of the people ran to the fence. Don't forget the autopsy. That's a farce. The brain is missing.

AB: Yeah, they said it looked like someone pushed his brain back in.

OS: And all of the sudden the autopsy at Bethesda reveals that it is an intact brain. It's insane. And that means that something, somebody doctored that autopsy and we prove that through a bunch of witnesses, including the photographer of the autopsy, who sees it in the ARB meeting. And he says that's not the photograph that I took. It's not even on the stock of film that I used.

AB: The forensics evidence that's outlined in the film is so overwhelming. But what I found

the most compelling was the parallel assassination plot that was uncovered in both Tampa and Chicago. I mean, just briefly talk about why this is so meaningful to the case.

OS: They were going to kill Kennedy one way or the other in the fall. That was the idea. The election was coming up for 64. So it was time. If he won that election they were dead in the water because they knew that he would pursue these policies even more ferociously, more eagerly. And they were scared of him. They're scared of Robert Kennedy, who was also the attorney general. There were a lot of reasons they didn't want this. It would have been possibly a dynasty, they saw another Roosevelt. You see they were thinking in those terms. Roosevelt, nobody expected him to go four terms. So when you're looking at the Kennedy family with Joe Kennedy and all that, it's only been 18 years since Roosevelt died. You have to understand it's just another time period. So they see the possibility of another dynasty. Robert will follow him and then maybe Ted, Ted Kennedy will be the third Kennedy, but it's not good for them because the country would move in a completely new direction towards peace. It's not going to happen. This is crucial that they get him in the fall. This is the time to get them. But basically in Chicago in early November, there was a plot. There was the same kind of parade route with a high building overlooking where the car had to make a turn, same setup. They picked up, a landlady said there were four Cubans in an apartment close by with rifles, and they picked up two of them. The other two disappear. They let them go. They disappear. It's stupid. These are rifles, high powered rifles they have in this apartment. Four Cubans, two of them they pick up. We don't even know what happens to them. And then they pick up another guy who is supposed to be the Lee Harvey Oswald of the deal that was Thomas Vallee. He was the same profile as Oswald, was a marine in Japan at one of the airbases there. They'd pin it on him the same way they'd pin it on Oswald. He felt the profile. I think they were doing this. I think they were thinking that we're going to get the shooter, the patsy, whoever he is, he's going to be pro Cuban leftists. So there would be more reason to go and attack Cuba, you understand?! The idea was if their plan worked, Cuba would take the blame. In Chicago, Kennedy cancels the Chicago trip, but he does go on the Tampa trip later, and that's a motorcade. Same thing, 20 miles or something, office building. And they have a Cuban shooter there, Lopez, Gilberto Lopez, I think his name was, and he ends up in, he doesn't go down. He takes the flight to Mexico and then Cuba. So he's another similar patsy.

AB: There's been this enormous rehabilitation campaign for the CIA today. They have rebranded themselves, especially during the Trump era. How does it feel as someone who has documented so thoroughly the CIA's crimes to see them elevated as a selfless public service agency?

OS: It's nonsense. It's depressing to be around liberals. I think that needs to be renamed. The liberals have fallen into this Russiagate, again and it's like the old days. You know, blame everything on Russia. You know, Russiagate was a sham, and it should have been seen as a sham right away because there was just no evidence. And then they went after Assange, who I think is a hero. And they went after him because they say he was involved with the

Russians. So the whole narrative was screwed up, as it would be in the Kennedy days. But if you see through it, through history, you see that this is Hillary Clinton covering her tracks. She was horrified by this loss to Donald Trump. The reason being, of course, all the problems the Democrats have, communicating, and she loses to Trump, and she has to blame it on somebody. She can't take the blame himself.

AB: It's mortifying, right? I mean, she had to...

OS: Obviously, what's the first thing she thinks of?! Russia. Or one of her people thinks of it, and they blame it and they get away with it.

AB: I mean you were blamed by Rolling Stone that the JFK conspiracy was basically concocted by a Russian disinformation campaign. It is ludicrous, the alternate reality that these people are living in. But these same liberals who pushed the sanitisation of the CIA will also say the CIA doesn't do that anymore. They don't conduct assassinations. They don't do coups all over. And also the JFK conspiracy can't be true because they would never do that on American soil. They would never commit heinous evil crimes.

OS: Well, that's silly. That's silly thinking because it's not historical. Conspiracies have existed since the beginning of time, and every country goes on and on and on. And you know, you have to accept that that's the way it is. Go read your history. People get killed, people are murdered, people change, governments change. Power is the goal, power. It's the greatest lure of all bigger than money.

AB: Well, especially because Operation Northwoods was revealed with the JFK Records Act and it revealed a false flag operation that was being proposed, which is mocked relentlessly. The idea of conspiracies in the US media, meanwhile, they accused Putin of bombing his own apartment buildings. They accuse them of concocting a false flag to invade Ukraine, right now. They are calling for pre-emptive strikes on Ukraine right now. What lessons can we glean from JFK today? With what we're seeing come full circle, Oliver, we're in the middle of Cold War 2.0.

OS: Exactly, exactly. Except they're not communists, they're capitalists. And it's no longer the Soviet Union, it's Russia. So it's continuing. Maybe it's about money in the end, that they have to keep this thing going. They need an enemy and they have to build up this enemy with China, Russia, Iran, Venezuela, Cuba. It doesn't end. I mean, Syria. All kinds of false flags have been planted for years now, and it is just getting stupider and stupider. And it gets really, as you say, it's very scary right now, Ukraine. I've been following that situation since 2014, and it's scary beyond belief because it's so irrational what we are doing. For example, we've been saying that Russia is going to invade Ukraine for about three months now, building it up in the media. Like it's like a build-up to a campaign for an advertising. Ignoring completely the Ukrainian on the ground situation, which is that the Ukrainian armies on the border of a

autonomous, what would like to be an autonomous republic inside Ukraine. These people are Russian people. They speak the Russian language. Their loyalty is to Russia, and it's been that way for forever since World War Two. They were robbed of their democracy when the American protests at Maidan Square happened, you know what happened? The Americans came in and supported the bill, put \$5 billion into Ukraine and created this demonstration. This monstrosity with a lot of false information that the president of Ukraine was a thief and a bum. He had agreed to go to early elections and it was ignored in the media. And now here we are in a situation where we replaced him in a coup d'état and we put a guy in who had no standing in the eastern part of Ukraine. They didn't want him. So it wasn't a democracy anymore. It turned out they'd been elected. The original guy had been elected. Now they have a counterfeit leader. They don't believe in them, but no one tells you that they were killed. A lot of people were murdered when that coup happened. They were burned to death in Odessa. And who burned them?! A lot of them were neo-Nazis. We find that out. We find that a large portion of the military situation, of the military of the Ukrainian Army, is fascist.

AB: It's insane when you look at the imperial arrogance of the United States to look at a country bordering with Russia and say, we need to do something about that because...

OS: ...because we control the narrative.

AB: It's unbelievable. You know, there's this deep seated distrust in our institutions...

OS: It should be.

AB: ...this has originated, I think, and proliferated obviously, since the JFK assassination.

OS: You mentioned one thing, very important. I just want to mention the Northwoods operation. Remember, that was a plan to destabilise Cuba, to invade Cuba, also concocted by the Pentagon. It involved things like blowing up buildings in the United States, killing people...

AB: ...killing Americans...

OS: ...money, running an aeroplane into a building, running an aeroplane into a building goes back to pre-2001.

AB: And, like you said, even though it was shot down, this is the first step to making things come true. When you write things down, it doesn't seem so ridiculous. When you're making a policy prescription all of a sudden it becomes feasible.

OS: Kennedy looked at the plan and laughed. He said, And we consider ourselves the human race. They're very dangerous. It's very dangerous.

AB: How do we deal with covert governance because you have this kind of cartoonish, remarkable idea of the deep state that Trump popularised, but it was partisan. It wasn't real. It wasn't a fundamental understanding of what we're dealing with. What the real deep state is, how can we even talk about this, how do we deal with this?

OS: Well, that was Jim Garrison's problem. He said, You know, you can't win a trial, an open trial, a Democratic trial, you cannot win it in a covert state. They cheat, they steal, they use every method possible to deny. And you cannot do it in a covert state. You have to understand the workings of the intelligence agency. And that we tried. We're trying, people like us, to try to bring out how they work. I do it in my movies. You do it in your news shows, and you're doing a good job at it. And we have to keep trying. But I'm scared too, you know, the intelligence agency might be fed up with me now. You know, Oh God, this guy Stone is getting too much. He is our fly in the ointment. But they got people like you to take my place.

AB: Well, they like delegitimizing people instead of taking them out.

OS: Well, we are on the margins now. I can't believe we haven't gotten one review from a major media publication on this film. One review. Editorials, but no, no reviews. Not one movie critic. Not one television critic. The assassination community has done tremendous amount of work. Nobody reports it. These are facts, not made up bullshit.

AB: No, it is airtight. Everyone obviously should watch the movie. I know that, you know, one thing that was really powerful for me was just it was really emotional to see JFK speech bookend at the end of the film scene, you know, you've seen the footage that you guys showed and just imagining what if. What if history took a different route?

OS: There would have been no Vietnam War, I tell you that, that's for sure. And it would have been a whole other approach to world affairs. I think we would have made a détente with Russia. We might be in a completely different situation, spending money on our real domestic needs, on our infrastructure and our health and welfare of our people. So that would have been too much for these people to handle. They want war because war makes money. You know, there was a strange thing that happened when- really people believe this- South of the Border was a documentary I did in 2009. I was talking to the president Nestor Kirchner, president of Argentina, and he told me George Bush had met with him down there and had come into the room and they were talking about the Venezuela situation and Bush actually said war is good for the economy. War is good for the economy. And he told the story. It's just amazing. He couldn't believe how stupid Bush was. But it's not good for the economy. It's a false belief. Economists, when they look at it, really understand that and make it clear that it's no good. War is destructive. And not only is it morally wrong, but it's destructive.

AB: And the notion that we need a covert intelligence force, right? This is embedded and

baked into this idea of American exceptionalism. And the fact that we can do this...

OS: You are going to have a hard time getting away from that argumentation.

AB: Well, we need to abolish the CIA.

OS: A long time ago I said that. Yeah, but the people are always going to want defence. I agree. We need a defence, but make it reasonable. Modify it, modify the behaviour has to be modified. If you are the biggest bully in the world, which we are, we scare people. You talk to people, whether they say, they say, Well, if we weren't the biggest on the block, China or Russia would be. Well, that's always what you hear, but you don't know it. You hear it. Because that's the justification for the bully to keep the terror going, to keep the fear going. So at some point you've got to say you can't keep building up. The bully has to modify his behaviour because he's so hated. That's what happens. And then we'll see if another bully arises and takes over. For some reason, I have very strong doubts about it because Russia has always stuck to its sphere of influence and China has always stuck to its sphere of influence. We're the only country in the world along with Great Britain that has gone into this world, global sphere of influence, where we assume we can run the globe. Very dangerous, very dangerous. We have to modify this behaviour. So I don't think we're going to lose the CIA ever and hopefully we lose a covert part of it. But still, it's going to be there and the military is going to be there. And we have to understand that people want security, but it's the degree of security. There was a great scene in Terry Malick's movie. I love that movie, Tree of Life. He's showing the early inhabitants of Earth and there's dinosaurs and all kinds of monsters, and you see a little dinosaur and he's running from the big dinosaur and the big dinosaur catches him. So, you know, you assume he's going to eat them, and the dinosaur puts its claw cloved, webbed foot on top of the little dinosaur and looks down at it and it makes a bunch of noise, you think he is going to get him, and then he lifts his claw, lets him go. And it was like saying, This is where mercy began. This is where human beings have to work together. We have to understand there's a human element here that we have to cooperate with each other.

AB: JFK's assassination led to unimaginable suffering and mass death around the world, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Brazil. The list goes on and on. This is a very grim history, not only in American history, but world history, Oliver. What would you tell people from the younger generation today who have no concept of this history, who don't understand who JFK really was? What do you want to leave them with in 2022 as the US empire is on this irreversible trajectory?

OS: I know. Obviously it's clear now what's happened. When we were young or when I was young, well, I felt the same way that there was hope in the world and idealism. You know, it was going to be a better world and it looked like it was going to be even with the Vietnam War. After that thing, we thought we, going to the 70s and the 80s, 90s, were- it didn't work out that way, and we couldn't control it, we couldn't fight it because a lot of people in my

generation went the other way. They started to believe all this, Well, we have to be stronger than them and we have to kick arse first because we're going to have our arse kicked- the bully argument. A lot of people went into that. And there was no real president alternative. If you think about it after Kennedy, no one was talking about peace. So I think things got control taken over. I think that the manipulators behind the scenes of the CIA's of the world, they understood the way the world worked and they took over in a sense when Kennedy was killed, the military and the intelligence agencies took over, secretly covertly and they run or a part of the government, the most important part. No president can go against them. No president can go against them. Kennedy tried, and de Gaulle actually tried, and he succeeded. He was one of the few who succeeded. They tried to kill him several times. He succeeded. But they eventually, they move in, and the NATOs of the world, they move in. That's what's scary. The whole world has been corporatized in that sense and militarily. Now it's going to become dangerous, more dangerous and as young people in the future you're not going to have a future if you let this happen. How do you stop it? I mean we're doing a lot of good things, making us aware of the environment and the environment is going to close us down, perhaps. Maybe they will- changes will happen. They always do. And you know, when you think things never change, it is when things happen. I thought many times that the Soviets and us would go to war, and all of a sudden Gorbachev came into power, right? And there was a wonderful moment. Who was this guy we didn't know? But he seemed like a nice guy and had a smile on his face. He was a different kind of Soviet leader. And sure enough, the Soviet Union changed. They said, OK, we're not going to fight you anymore. That's really what happened. And Gorbachev was a hope in the world that I can't tell you how strong that was. And we all felt it. Those of us who were sensitive to it. It was a great time, 90s. And we went to war right away after Gorbachev, where Bush went to war, the first Bush, went to war with Iraq on that ridiculous Kuwait war, which was again another provocation that we created. We attacked Noriega right after we made the agreement with Gorbachev. Noriega was, you know, sovereign president of the country, and we went right and snatched him and pulled him out, saying, We are laying down the laws. The United States can intervene anywhere it wants, can break any treaty at once, like with the Indians, and just do what it wants. There's no law. We talk about law, but we don't really respect it. And Bush, the second Bush, when he went into Iraq, same thing, Oh, fuck the lawyers. We're just going to go ahead and do it.

AB: We need to change that mentality, Oliver.

OS: It's a mentality. But those guys get elected, tough guys. So, but don't give up because things change. As I said in the 80s, in the 70s, coming off Carter, it looked bad. Reagan was making war noises. It looked bad and all of a sudden, Gorbachev. So sometimes there's a twist of fate. You know, the wheel turns differently. That's what I'm hoping for. Something happens that you don't expect.

END