

Jim Garrison courtroom speech in *JFK* #####
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Who grieves for Lee Harvey Oswald? Buried in a cheap grave under the name Oswald? Nobody. Within minutes false statements and press leaks about Lee 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 the thought-numbing funeral of JFK confuse the eye and confound the understanding.

Hitler always 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 would make them dangerous to men who are committed to war, would follow. Also killed by such lonely, crazed men. Men who remove our 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 is our citizenship, and more, our lives, worth. What is the future of a democracy where a president can be assassinated under conspicuously 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 airplane and car crashes will occur before they are exposed for what they are?

"Treason doth never prosper," wrote an English poet. What's the reason? Well 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 photographs of the autopsy. Why? There are hundreds of documents that could help prove this conspiracy. Why are they being withheld or burned by the government? Each time our office or you the people have asked those questions, demanded crucial evidence, the answer from on high has always been 'national security.'

What kind of national security do we have when we have been robbed of our leaders? What national security permits the removal of fundamental power from the hands of the American people and validates the ascendancy of invisible government in the United States? That kind of national security, gentlemen of the jury, is, 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'etat. Its most direct and tragic result was the reversal of President Kennedy's commitment to withdraw from Vietnam. For war is the biggest business in America worth 80 billion dollars a year. President Kennedy was murdered by a conspiracy that was planned in advance at the highest levels of our government and it was 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 likeminded individuals in the Dallas Police Department, the Secret Service, the FBI, and the White House. All the way up to and including J. Edgar Hoover and Lyndon Johnson, whom I consider accomplices after the fact.

The assassination reduced the president to a transient official. His job, his assignment, is to speak as often as possible of this nation's desire for peace while he acts as a business agent in the Congress for the military and their hardware manufacturers. Now some people say I'm crazy.

Southern caricature seeking higher office. Well there is a simple way to determine if I am paranoid: let's ask the two men who profited the most from the assassination: your former president Lyndon Baines Johnson and your new president Richard Nixon, to release the 51 CIA documents pertaining to Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby. Or the secret CIA memo on Oswald's activities in Russia that was destroyed while being photocopied.

All these documents are yours. The people's property. You pay for it. But because the government considers you children who might be too disturbed or distressed to face this reality (or because you might possibly lynch those involved?), you cannot see these documents for another 75 years. I'm in my early 40s, so I'll have shuffled off this mortal coil by then. but I'm already telling my eight-year-old son to keep himself physically fit, so that one glorious September morning, in the year 2038, he can walk into the National Archives and find out what the CIA and the FBI knew! They may even push it back then, hell it may become a generational affair, with questions passed down father to son, mother to daughter, but someday, somewhere, someone may find out the damned truth.

We better. We better! Or we might just as well build ourselves another government, like the Declaration of Independence says to, when the old one ain't workin', just a little 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 much hidden evidence the American public has never seen.

You know going back to when we were children, I think that most of us in this courtroom thought that justice came into being automatically, that virtue was its own reward, that good would triumph over evil. But as we get older we know this just 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 themselves. People like S.M. Holland, Lee Bowers, Jean Hill, Willie O'Keefe have all taken that risk, they've all come forward. I have here some \$8000 in these letters sent to my office from all over the country—quarters, dimes, dollar bills, from housewives, plumbers, car salesmen, teachers, invalids. These are people who cannot afford to send money but do. These are the ones who drive the cabs, who nurse in the 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 the truth does not endure, if the government murders truth, if truth dies in the hearts of our people, then this is not the country I was born in and it's certainly not 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, and bringing the 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 that 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.