from Phyllis Schlafly

January 16, 1992

Old Illusions and New Exposes

Both left-wingers and right-wingers are upset about Oliver Stone's movie "JFK" because, being a well-crafted visual, it tends to make people believe a false explanation of the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963. The trouble with Stone's critics is that, while they are right about Stone being wrong, many unanswered questions remain, and the American people are stil1 the victims of a coverup by the Warren Commission.

A murder is always a fascination, and we may never know the whole truth about Kennedy's death. However, we are beginning to learn the whole truth about his life, which, until recently, has been the subject of just -as many mysteries, illusions, and coverups.

The new book A Question of Character: A Lite of John F. Kennedy by the noted historian Thomas C. Reeves exposes once and for all the massive difference between JFK's impressive public image and his reckless, vain, selfish, and lecherous private life. Reeves describes how the American people were the victims of a massive deception in which the media were willing accomplices.

This fascinating book was not written by an anti-Kennedy conservative. If it had been, chances are it never would have been published, and if it had been published it would have been denounced as a partisan diatribe. Reeves' leftwing attitudes, biases and semantics are evident throughout the book.

So how did he come to do this hatchet job on the Prince of Camelot who led liberalism in its most fashionable years? Apparently, it was the hypocrisy of the man that so disillusioned Reeves. After he read everything written about JFK, Reeves realized that he and the American people had believed a world-class lie.

Reeves traces Kennedy from boyhood through the Thousand Days of his presidency by copiously documenting every event from several sources, friendly and unfriendly. This methodology exposes the consistent way that the Kennedy family and their supporters concealed, misrepresented, glossed over, exaggerated, or generally prevaricated about the truth in order to build the King Arthur image.

Jack was propelled to national prominence as a war hero, an intellectual writer, and then a political leader by the lavish expenditures of his father, Ambassador Joseph Kennedy. Joe arranged the production of “PT-109” (a highly flattering movie about Jack’s alleged heroics in the South Pacific), orchestrated news coverage and favorable magazine articles, and financed and directed all of Jack’s political campaigns.

Jack's first book, Why England Slept was written with the help of New York Times reporter Arthur Knock and was made into a best-seller by Joe Kennedy buying 40,000 copies and storing them in the basement of his Hyannis Port home. Kennedy's most famous book, profiles Courage, was written with the help of Ted Sorensen, who thereafter was the ghost-writer of all Jack's rich historical references, flowing sentences, wit, and literary eloquence.

Reeves describes Kennedy's drive for the Presidency in fascinating detail. He exposes Kennedy's cynical manipulation of issues (such as “poverty” and the phony “missile gap"), the unrestrained spending by Jack's father, the vote frauds, the secret election help of the Mafia, the “ceaseless adultery,” and the dishonesty about his intellectual achievements, bad health, and war record.

From primary sources, Reeves has distilled authentic history of the various crises of the Kennedy Administration: the Bay of Pigs, the meeting with Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna, the Berlin Wa11, the Cuban Missile crisis, and the war in Vietnam culminating with the U.S.-arranged assassination of Diem. Reeves describes Kennedy’s panic, lies, and eagerness to blame others, and how the media made him emerge from each blunder with the aura of a winner.

The “Camelot School” of adulatory books and articles propagated the Kennedy myth, and the Kennedy family bullied non-approved authors and publishers into deleting damaging material. It was a carrot-and- stick relationship: friendly reporters and writers were courted with private interviews and inside information, and unfriendly ones were punished.

The pro-Kennedy books painted Jack as a family man, devoted to his wife and children. The reality was that Kennedy’s sexual lifestyle was like that of Magic Johnson (“I did my best to accommodate as many women as I could”), and marriage never interfered with a long succession of trysts with available women, including employees, wives of acquaintances, and actresses.

For at least a year, he simultaneously shared a mistress, Judith Campbell Exner, with Mafia boss Sam Giancana (whose murder is still unsolved). Sam played a major role in Jack’s secret attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro (called Operation Mongoose).

The book's thesis is that Jack Kennedy’s defective character was molded by his ambitious, selfish, adulterous, pragmatic father. But the value of this hard-to-put-down book is the way the national media could be bought to cooperate in a fabric of lies in order to elect a man President of the United States and maintain the myth that he was a national hero.