

# FOREWORD

BY MICK FARREN

## A GRASSY KNOLL TOO FAR

I HAVE MAYBE, AT THIS LATE STAGE IN THE GAME, STOOD ON TOO MANY grassy knolls and listened too long to the seductively mendacious counterclaims and crossfire of disinformation. I may now need a map to tell me where I've been. I find it hard to still rise to the same continuing fury at all the manifold layers of lies denied, and all the distortions of disappointment and contortions of evil that have buckled and manipulated our hidden human history. Who burned the Reichstag? Do I really care anymore? Or is it sufficient that the building burned and Nazism was provided with a gift-wrapped faux-excuse for butchery and brutality, and a spurious rationale to tighten the already-locked iron manacles of oppression and jackboot dictatorship? All too often the real and sad purpose of core conspiracies is merely to provide a mask for the perpetrators—the murderers who manage the seeming impossibility of being able to remain unashamed of their holocaust handiwork even when the numbers run to visible millions.

My own first conspiracy encounter was in November of 1963, but it wasn't—as might be so completely expected—wholly and directly concerned with the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The first US President to offer any measure of hope to my generation had been gunned down in an open Lincoln Continental, on a sixties-modern, urban freeway plaza in Dallas, Texas. But—by day two—the drama was already being spun and promoted as a uniquely fatal aberration by the first lone-nut gunman of my lifetime, and I was a sufficiently perverse teenager that my hackles rose not so much at the killing of the king but at the slaying of Lee Harvey Oswald, the alleged assassin, by Jack Ruby, a low level bagman for Chicago mob boss Sam Giancana.

Jack Kennedy may have been the hallowed victim with the bloody and exposed brain, the shattered head, and the Zapruder-film death throes, laid low because he sought to challenge the military industrial complex and defang the mayhem maze of the national intelligence community, but it was Oswald who opened the complex and convoluted gates of Eden. He was the corpse-portal to a half-century of the KGB, the CIA, the Illuminati, the eyes-in-pyramids, supersonic spy-planes, cheap Italian mail-order rifles, all the way to the Jungian realms of all-controlling aliens from Zeta Reticuli, and gun battles fought in the measureless caverns of their luminous green bases beneath Dulce, New Mexico. Oswald was the first to usher me through the distorted looking glass and down into the paranoid labyrinth where octopods link the pawns and possibilities, logical conclusions orbit scenarios of doom, and we encounter our worst fears coming back at us as fact, when morning commuter jets cleave in flames through the towers of Manhattan.

I may very well have stood too long on too many grassy knolls than have been good for either my health, sanity, or perspectives of history, and I have definitely listened far too long to the seductively mendacious counterclaims and the crossfire of disinformation. I may now really need a map to tell me where I've been. Thus it is that, when a book like David Ray Carter's *Conspiracy Cinema* can provide an authoritative guide to the almost unknowable territory of conspiracy—in this case as presented by multiple levels of motion pictures—I can only rejoice that my time in the twisting wind was not in vain, and that generations to come will not be compelled to relearn the hard way all the turns and tricks of a terrifying and frequently terrorist game.

# PREFACE

BY THOMAS M<sup>C</sup>GRATH

WHEN THE TWIN TOWERS FELL, THE WORLD WAS TOLD TO BLAME ISLAMIC terrorists, and America embarked on a 'crusade' against terror, the post-millennial message was that the twentieth century, distinguished by the clash of ideologies, of contesting rational ideas, was a mere contrempts in human history, and our species had promptly reverted to what it knows best, not the clash of rational ideas, but of irrational ones—metaphysical, magical, religious...

Bad enough, for those raised in an aging Enlightenment worldview! The least you might say was that humanity appeared cursed, but for the fact that the very idea of a curse was well outside rational boundaries. In short, the Enlightenment itself took a crushing blow that day, a wound echoed in the reality principles of most westerners that watched the attacks on television. Was it any accident that within a couple of years some authors from England (usually the home of passive agnosticism) began a global debate about—the existence of God? Was it any accident that within a couple of years a very sizable number of souls would have doubts regarding the real authors of the 9-11 attacks themselves—mostly courtesy of a growing cinematic genre, freely distributed online, which the author of this book has christened Conspiracy Cinema?

Doubts regarding the real authors of the 9-11 attacks? In his best-selling polemic against conspiracy theories, *Voodoo Histories* (a fairly recent addition to the English rationalist reaction of Hitchens, Dawkins *et al*), David Aaronovitch appeals to Thomas Paine's ironic blueprint for analyzing miracles—it is always more likely that someone is lying, or mistaken, than nature's machine has hiccupped, and therefore no account of a miracle can ever really be taken seriously. Aaronovitch suggests we might profitably apply the same criteria when considering conspiracy theories, and we can see why he might equate the miracle

# INTRODUCTION

## CONSPIRACY THEORIES & CONSPIRACY CINEMA

with the conspiracy—for wouldn't, say, 9-11 being a self-inflicted wound and stage-managed spectacle be... miraculous. Much more likely that whatever is said, or whomsoever says it, is mistaken, or mendacious...

Some people are naturally repelled by the existential instability the existence of miracles and/or conspiracies imply (Paine's formula licenses the aversion very neatly). Others, however, are drawn to it, and consequently often become addicted to the subject, endlessly searching for the impossible—a conclusive piece of information that would establish that reality is as fragile, dangerous and daunting as the existence of miracles and/or conspiracies implies.

And so Conspiracy Cinema has to be one of the strangest genres of cinema ever conceived, a form of entertainment where the average viewer suspends their *belief*, which is to say their worldview, allowing it to be attacked for an hour or two, the philosophical equivalent of an extreme sport. And with *Conspiracy Cinema*, David Ray Carter has written what this both omnipresent and marginalized genre has lacked—a definitive guide, an overview that enables the reader to appreciate the many tendrils that interconnect the competing conspiracies, as well as offering lucid and insightful evaluations of the respective production values and lines of argument employed by the films used to communicate these theories to mass audiences.

The full interaction with the topic this work invites the reader to embark upon (the countless films it introduces being the click of a mouse away) is an exhausting, frightening and—at least to those tireless hunters of the historical miracle—tantalizing one, a systematic derangement of the historical senses. Which might just be what any self-respecting citizen of this increasingly terrifying century be advised to get a head start on.

THE TERM "CONSPIRACY THEORY" IS COMMONLY USED TO REFER TO A BELIEF that differs from or runs counter to the accepted line of thinking on a particular topic. It is almost exclusively used derogatorily, implying a view that is unfounded, illogical, or paranoid. By way of an example: a belief that the timing of a traffic light is not set to ensure the orderly flow of traffic but is, in fact, orchestrated specifically to make you late for work meets all the qualifications for this definition of conspiracy theory. It is unprovable, highly illogical, and paranoid to assume that local governments, urban planners, and civil engineers would conspire against a single individual, much less so for a reason from which they would get no obvious benefit.

Conspiracism, or belief in conspiracy theories, is about more than simply finding an excuse for your tardiness, however. Conspiracism is a belief system, a way of looking at the world. Conspiracy theories are an approach to historical analysis that discard the accepted versions in favor of alternate ones by interpreting the historical record differently or, as is often the case, using a different set of records all together. To the conspiracy theorist, unseen machinations are at the root of every world event and invisible hands guide the course of human history. But a conspiracy theory view of history denotes something greater than merely acknowledging the times when the existence of a conspiracy has been proven, such as in the Dreyfus Affair or Watergate. In its most common usage, conspiracism is more specifically the study of covert actions taken by those with power—be it political, financial, or organizational—against those without it in order to sustain or expand that power. It is not a Marxist view of history, but instead a world view where history is dictated not by the struggle between the haves and the have-nots but between the controllers and the controlled.