

# **“The Assassination and Mrs. Paine”. The Last Link to the Murder of JFK. Review and Analysis by Edward Curtin**

A Review Essay of Max Good’s documentary film

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*Human duplicity is a marvel to contemplate. This riveting documentary is an excellent example of such cunning in action, not on the part of the filmmaker who is eminently fair, perhaps overly so, but on the part of some of those who appear in the film. It demands that viewers use every skill in their possession to determine who is lying and who is telling the truth about the involvement of a woman named Ruth Paine (and her husband Michael) in the assassination of President Kennedy. In many ways, it is akin to sitting in a jury box, listening to trial testimony from witnesses for the defense and prosecution and from a few whose slippery words seem meant to create uncertainty and never-ending debate about Paine’s innocence or guilt in the president’s murder.*

The film will be an eye-opener for anyone unfamiliar with Mrs. Ruth Paine’s fundamental role at the heart of the president’s murder; and for those knowledgeable about her, it will be greeted as an important contribution to the case. I believe it is not just a must watch for those interested in JFK’s assassination, which is the key to all subsequent American history, but for anyone trying to unravel today’s tapestry of lies and propaganda spewing out from the mainstream media (MSM) that go by different names – CBS, ABC, the Washington Post, etc. – but all of whom speak for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The basic equation is: CIA = MSM.

Since many people are adept at lying, they think they are good at sniffing out lies in others. This is highly questionable. We live in a country of lies, from the top down and the bottom up; propaganda and the everyday lies that grease the skids of social intercourse. Deceptions that deceive no one. Lying is the leading cause of spiritual death in the United States, even as devotion to truth is embraced as a national platitude. Even when such fealty to truthfulness isn’t professed or implied and the lying is admitted, as with ex-CIA Director Mike Pompeo’s 2019 [remark](#) about the CIA at Texas A&M university – “We lied, we cheated,

we stole” – such treachery is uttered proudly and with a chuckle. It’s what everybody knows and pretends they don’t.

There are some intellectuals, like [Noam Chomsky](#), who like to say that many who lie believe their own stories because of their institutional affiliations – e.g. journalists for the *BBC*, *The New York Times*, *CBS*, etc. (but not the Defense Department-funded MIT where he spent his career) – because such institutions require that the employees they hire have internalized the script in advance. But they don’t call it lying, for it is built into the socialization process that leads to positions within such institutions. So they are only doing their jobs and lack awareness of any duplicity. They are innocent of their own complicity in censorship and propaganda in stories they report. They have no knowledge of the fact that their mainstream employers have long been proven to be mouthpieces for the CIA, M-16, etc.

Focused exclusively on institutional analyses, Chomsky denies these people a place for individual freedom and consciousness, as he does with his long-held absurd assertion that JFK’s assassination is of little importance and his denial of the clearly documented facts about how Kennedy took a radical turn toward peacemaking in the last year of his life, a metanoia that led directly to his death.

He is correct, however, that such MSM people don’t need to self-censor, for their jobs require them to play the game according to the censorship rules under which they were hired, but he is very wrong to claim they therefore believe what they say. That assumes these people are very ignorant, which they are not; that they just obliviously do their jobs and collect their pay. He fails to distinguish between playing dumb and being dumb.

It would be more accurate to say that they live in what Jean Paul Sartre calls “bad faith” (*mauvaise foi*), for “the essence of a lie implies in fact that the liar actually is in complete possession of the truth which he is hiding .... The ideal description of a liar would be a cynical consciousness, affirming truth within himself, denying it in his words, and denying the negation as such.”

You can’t lie to yourself, for that would mean you were two people. But you can lie to others. And you can play dumb. It’s called acting. And of course many journalists and academics hold dual positions, since they secretly work as assets for the intelligence services.

I begin with these thoughts about lying because a good number of the people who appear in [The Assassination and Mrs. Paine](#) have no ostensible institutional affiliation but may be working in some capacity for an invisible institutional paymaster who calls their tunes. No names required. They implicitly present themselves as disinterested pursuers of truth, yet viewers are forced to assess the veracity of their claims, including those of Ruth Paine who appears throughout, answering Max Good’s interview questions.

Much has been written and filmed about the JFK assassination. Most take a broad perspective. This film is quite different because it approaches it through a personal focus on a woman named Ruth Paine who, for those who may not have heard of her, was the key witness against Lee Harvey Oswald at the Warren Commission (WC) hearings where she was asked more than five-thousand questions (her husband Michel was asked 1,000 or so). She is the woman who invited Marina Oswald to live with her in her home in the Dallas suburb of Irving, Texas, where Lee Harvey Oswald also spent weekends from late September 1963 up until the morning of the Assassination on November 22, 1963. Her testimony led to the

WC's conclusion that Oswald, and Oswald alone shot, the president.

*The Assassination and Mrs. Paine* is Max Good's second full-length documentary. He came to the subject after reading a section (pp.168-172) on Ruth and Michael Paine in James W. Douglass's *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died & Why It Matters*, a book considered by many to be the best on the JFK assassination. He felt the Paines' story shouted out for a documentary, and when he discovered that Ruth Paine was still alive, in her late eighties, lucid, and living near him in a Quaker retirement home in California, he contacted her and she agreed to be interviewed, something she has done for 59 years, always protesting her innocence, even though over the decades researchers have uncovered much evidence to the contrary.

Her ex-husband, Michael, also lived at the home but has since died. There's a brief interview of little consequence with him in the film since his memory was going, but I should note that he too is a crucial figure in the assassination story. Both he and Ruth have always denied involvement in the plot and coverup, yet much evidence connects them to it. Michael Paine's involvement is artfully suggested by the film's title – "Mrs. Paine" and not simply Ruth Paine, a woman acting alone. The Paines, who have claimed they are pacifists, might best be superficially described as unassuming, liberal Quaker/Unitarian do-gooders, whose wealth and astounding family and intelligence connections would make heads spin, if they were known. The film exposes many of those connections.

The fundamental undisputed facts are as follows. In February 1963, Ruth, who spoke and taught Russian, was invited to a party by George de Mohrenschildt, a White Russian CIA asset who was 'babysitting' Lee Harvey Oswald at the request of the CIA. There she met Oswald. Soon de Mohrenschildt would go to Haiti and Ruth would establish a relationship with Lee and Marina Oswald. In September, Ruth Hyde Paine visited family in eastern Massachusetts on Naushon Island, owned by the Forbes family. Michael Paine's mother, Ruth's mother-in-law, was Ruth Forbes Paine Young, from the blue-blood Forbes family of Boston. She was friends with the CIA's Allen Dulles since her best friend was Mary Bancroft who was Dulles's mistress. They had stayed on the island.

From Massachusetts, Ruth drove to New Orleans to pick up the Russian speaking Marina Oswald and the Oswald's belongings to bring her back to Dallas to live with her. It's a small, unassuming house, but there was room for Marina and her children because Michael Paine had conveniently moved out in the spring, allegedly because of marital problems, but would move back in the winter after the assassination and Marina's departure. Ruth says she did this to help a woman in need.

On her long road trip south, she made numerous stops, including at her sister Sylvia Hyde Hoke's house in Falls Church, Virginia. Sylvia worked for the CIA, as documents have confirmed, and her husband worked for the agency's front, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), yet to this day – and in Good's interview in the film – she claims not to know where her sister worked. Ruth's father, William Avery Hyde, also worked for U.S. AID in Latin America and his reports went to the CIA. From her sister's house, Ruth proceeded to New Orleans where she picked up Marina and took her to her house in Irving. In mid-October, again out of alleged kindness, she got Lee a job in the Texas School Book Depository, despite calls to her house from an employment agency offering him a much higher paying job. When asked about this by the Warren Commission, Ruth gave an evasive answer. Then when JFK was killed, an empty blanket roll that allegedly held Oswald's rifle

was found in the Paines' garage. And Ruth claimed to have found a note – the "Walker Note" that was used to show his propensity for violence – and a letter also allegedly written by Oswald to the Russian Embassy that was used as evidence of his guilt. There is much more of a strange and suspicious nature involving Ruth and the Oswalds.

The Paines have always said that Oswald killed Kennedy to make a name for himself – the little man kills the big one syndrome. They repeat this in the documentary. Ruth says of Oswald, "He realized he had the opportunity to no longer be a little guy but someone extraordinary." But as Jim DiEugenio (one of the finest and most informed commentators in the film) says, if that were so, then why did Oswald always claim he was innocent, a patsy who didn't shoot anyone. Those who wish to kill to make a name for themselves obviously claim credit, but the Paines seem not to get this. Their claim makes no sense, yet they both repeat it in the film.

And although the film's focus is on Ruth, not Michael, there are other undisputed facts about him worth noting. As previously mentioned, his mother was Ruth Forbes Paine Young. After divorcing Michael's father, Lyman Paine, his mother married a man named Arthur Young. Among other strange facts about Young, he was the inventor of the Bell helicopter, which was the prototype for the infamous Huey helicopter used in Vietnam. Those helicopters were produced at the defense contractor Bell Helicopter in Fort Worth, Texas where Michael, the pacifist, worked through his connection to Arthur Young. He had a security clearance; when the Warren Commission asked him what type of clearance, he said he didn't know. One of his cousins, Thomas Dudley Cabot (the Boston Cabots), was a former president of the United Fruit Company, and another, John Cabot, worked for the State Department where he exchanged information about the CIA-United Fruit coup d'état against Jacobo Arbenz. Later, he was president of the CIA front company Gibraltar Steamship Corporation that leased Swan Island in the Caribbean for the CIA, where the agency set up Radio Swan that was used during the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, among other things (see pp.193-208 in James DiEugenio's *Destiny Betrayed*, second edition, for important information on the Paines).

All this factual background on the Paines doesn't definitively prove anything about them, but it is essential to assess their credibility, and watching *The Assassination and Mrs. Paine* is all about doing that.

The question about Ruth that the film asks is whether she is a truthful, naïve, Quaker do-gooder or a CIA asset, a pawn, or someone in deep denial (whatever that is).

She has her defenders and they appear in the film along with well-known supporters of her and the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald did the deed alone: Max Holland, Gerald Posner, Priscilla Johnson McMillan, Jack Valenti, Michael Beschloss, and Peter Jennings.

From the so-called prosecution side we hear from: Jim DiEugenio, Dr. Gary Aguilar, Dr. Martin Schotz, Vince Salandria, and Sue Wheaton.

Paine's defenders make sure to bash Oliver Stone and his film, *JFK*, and Ruth claims Stone never contacted her about her portrayal in the film. Stone denies this and says she would not talk to him. But she makes it clear that she is a big fan of various Network TV specials that support the WC, especially the London mock trial with Gerry Spence and Vincent Bugliosi, and a Peter Jennings ABC special.

Ruth Paine is given a lot of screen time between her defenders and accusers. As I said, Max Good is more than fair, perhaps too fair. Paine is a cool character who only rarely gets a bit flustered. She's been doing these interviews for a long time, and is either a good actor or an innocent bystander, as she says, "I'm kind of naïve .... But I think it's a blessing."

After giving both sides their say – and a few others, whom I won't mention, who make lawyerly-like slippery statements – Bill Simpich interjects that there is "something about the Ruth Paine story that simply doesn't jell." Good then proceeds to ask Ruth a series of hard questions that viewers will find very interesting. But he never lets the audience know what he has concluded about her guilt or innocence. He is impartial to the end.

I am not. For before watching the film, I knew a great deal about the Paines and their roles in the assassination and its cover-up. I completely agree with the Philadelphia lawyer Vince Salandria, one of the earliest and most brilliant critics of the official story, when he says "You can't close the circle without the Paines. There is no way they can be innocent. No way."

And he added the film's penultimate statement about the assassination:

There is no mystery here. It's all self-evident. It was a coup. It was designed to be a false mystery and the debate would be eternal and why it [killing JFK] was done – forgotten. In order to commit yourself to truth here, you're changing your real identity from a citizen of a democracy to a subject of a military empire. A big step.

Ruth Paine, however, gets the final word. Regarding all the claims about her involvement with the CIA and the Oswalds: "Nonsense. Absolute nonsense .... I am interested in truth .... I'm a very independent person. Nobody tells me what to do."

I highly recommend that people watch this important film and reach a verdict based on the evidence it provides, and if they need more, to read the works of Douglass and DiEugenio mentioned earlier, among others. As good as a film can be, it is only as good as the sources it relies upon.

Human duplicity is a marvel to contemplate. *The Assassination and Mrs. Paine* will force you to do that. Don't miss it.

Watch the trailer below.

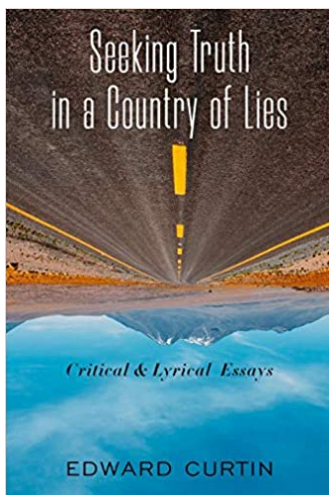
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*This article was originally published on the author's blog site, [Behind the Curtain](#).*

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*Featured image is from maxgoodfilm.com*



He is the author of *Seeking the Truth in a Country of Lies*

To order his book, [click the cover page](#).

“*Seeking Truth in a Country of Lies* is a dazzling journey into the heart of many issues — political, philosophical, and personal — that should concern us all. Ed Curtin has the touch of the poet and the eye of an eagle.” Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

“Edward Curtin puts our propaganda-stuffed heads in a guillotine, then in a flash takes us on a redemptive walk in the woods — from inferno to paradiso. Walk with Ed and his friends — Daniel Berrigan, Albert Camus, George Orwell, and many others — through the darkest, most-firefly-filled woods on this earth.” James W. Douglass, author, *JFK and the Unspeakable*

“A powerful exposé of the CIA and our secret state... Curtin is a passionate long-time reform advocate; his stories will rouse your heart.” Oliver Stone, filmmaker, writer, and director

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