

Parkland (2013)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 33 min.

Our content ratings: Violence 4; Language 2; Sex/Nudity 0.

Our star rating (1-5): 4.5

*Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!*

1 Samuel 1:19

With [Jackie](#), the film about Jaqueline Kennedy, drawing so much attention, film lovers might want to watch on video director Peter Landesman's film, based on the book by Vincent Bugliosi. The title refers to the Dallas hospital in which both President Jack Kennedy and his murderer Lee Harvey Oswald died. Whereas *Jackie* moves quickly on to Washington DC after the President's murder, this one stays in Dallas to chronicle the events in the area during the next 3 days involving the less famous people caught up in the turmoil. Indeed, the role of Jackie Kennedy (Kat Steffens) is but a cameo in this film. As in the new film, you will learn a lot that you didn't know about this widely-publicized tragedy.

Those left behind in Dallas include the staff at Parkland Hospital, where first, the President, and then a few days later, the killer Lee Harvey Oswald, were brought. Nurse Doris Nelson (Marcia Gay Harden) becomes the calm center of the storm in the operating room where novice Dr. Jim Carrico (Zac Efron) is the first of several doctors to try to revive the mortally wounded President.

Earlier, few miles away before the arrival of the Presidential motorcade, businessman Abraham Zapruder (Paul Giamatti) comes out of his office with his 8-mm camera to photograph the grand occasion. Peering through the viewfinder, he is horrified to

discover that the President has been shot as he is filming, but has the presence of mind to keep filming. Later there will be quite a sequence in which the Feds accompany him to find a lab that can develop the film so they can closely examine the event. Later about every publication in the country so harasses Zapruder that he wishes he had not made the film. He deals with the editor of *Life Magazine* because of his respect for his straightforwardness.

The head of the Secret Service detail guarding the President is Forrest Sorrels (Billy Bob Thornton). He suffers intense feelings of guilt and shame for "losing his man." Although there have been other presidents murdered, none have been lost since the agency took over the protection of the president in 1902.

James Hosty (Ron Livingston) an FBI agent who was monitoring Lee Harvey Oswald also feels terrible. He had decided the suspect was not a major threat, so he had never arrested him.

Robert Oswald (James Badge Dale), the brother of Lee Harvey Oswald is left to cope with the public shame of being related to the murderer. A Dallas police detective says to him, "If I were you, I'd consider changing my name. I'd pray I never needed the help of the Dallas Police Department or the federal government again. I'd pack your things and your wife and those two children of yours, and I'd move as far from here as I could. I'd never come back, even to die. But that's just me." Poor Robert also has his hands full dealing with his deranged mother Marquerite Oswald (Jacki Weaver) who rants and raves about Lee. The burial of the killer is both pitiable and moment of grace scene. While the Oswalds are on their way to the cemetery their helpful friend receives a call that the cemetery has refused permission to bur Lee Harvey there. The friend (or is he a funeral director?) says for them to wait a moment, that a friend owes him a favor. In the next scene, permission obviously having been obtained, the tiny group stands by the open grave while a clergyman says a few words.

Obviously, obtaining a willing clergyman had been a problem also, the pastor commenting that someone needed to render the family this service. It seems almost like a quiet apology to his community for having any contact with America's most hated family.

This relatively unknown film deserves a wider audience, and maybe it will if *Jackie* becomes a hit. As a film in which a group of famous and ordinary people suffer "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" it is superb. Those few days, so close to Thanksgiving Day in 1963, were a chaotic mess in which the goodness of God was challenged, as we see in *Jackie*. From these two films, detailing so many of the results of that horrific day, we might see the wisdom of the words of the apostle Paul in his glorious 8th chapter of Romans, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose." (RSV)

Note: A good fictional film dealing with JFK's murder is [Love Field](#), starring Michelle Pfeiffer as a Dallas Jackie Kennedy fan determined to travel to Washington DC to attend the funeral, despite the objections of her boorish husband,

This review with a set of questions will be in the Jan. 2017 issue of VP.