

Hurricane Carter: The Other Side of the Story

Dedicated to those Hollow Souls of Hollywood, who don't care who they hurt as long as it turns a profit.

NORMAN JEWISON'S FALSUMENTARY

"The Hurricane" Misleads a Trusting Public

Norman Jewison's movie "The Hurricane" is a screenful of factual inaccuracies that give a completely false impression of how the real events went down — from a grossly misleading depiction of the killers' getaway to a completely fictitious and hideous portrayal of the key detective..



As propaganda for the deification of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, the movie succeeds brilliantly, but as an honest portrayal of the events surrounding the murders, it is a miserable failure. Instead of being considered for an Oscar, Mr. Jewison deserves "The Oliver Stone Distortion of History Award."

The inaccuracy of the movie has eclipsed even the inaccuracy of Bob Dylan's song "Hurricane," which, as it turns out, is an appropriate soundtrack for this falsumentary.

Here is a point-by-point look at how you've been misled by this movie:

The Gunmen Made a Quick, Shadowy Getaway

THE MOVIE: The gunmen run out of the front door of the bar and through the shadows to their getaway car, which is waiting at the curb. Al Bello is shown watching the shadowy figures from a distance.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: Bello could never have identified the gunmen with such a fleeting glimpse of darkened figures.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: The gunmen came out the front door, turned to the right, walked around the corner and walked down the sidewalk, laughing and talking loudly, according to Bello's testimony. They were so brazen that Bello at first thought they were gun-wielding cops. Only when he got to within 10 or 15 feet of them did Bello realize that they weren't cops. He turned and ran for his life.

The getaway car, rather than being parked at the curb out front, was in the westbound lane of the side street that ran alongside the bar.

Pat Valentine was in a bay window overlooking that street. She looked down to see them running away from the building, getting into the car and driving off.

DOCUMENTATION

- Bello's statement to police, October 1966
- Pat Valentine's testimony

The Police Phone Log Was Faked to Say 2:45 A.M.

THE MOVIE: A group of Canadians — convinced of Carter's innocence after reading the convicted triple murderer's book — find a slip of paper that indicates that the murders occurred at 2:45, not 2:30. The slip appears to be in the handwriting of the racist detective who is out to get Carter.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: Carter could not possibly have been committed murder at 2:30 because he was in the Nite Spot with friends at that time, so the racist detective faked the time of the murders to be consistent with Carter's innocent movements.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Moviegoers have really focused on this bogus issue, and because I've received so many e-mails about it, I'm providing some extra documentation.

Among the people with first-hand knowledge are Pat Valentine, who phoned police to report the killings, and Jim Lawless, the first police officer to arrive at the scene. Both told me there is no question that the murders occurred at 2:30.

Here is the sequence of events:

- 2:30 a.m. — Four people are shot in the Lafayette Grill.
- 2:34 a.m. — Pat Valentine calls police to report the murders. Police are notified by radio to look for a white car with two “colored” occupants.
- 2:40 a.m. — A white car containing Carter, Artis and a man believed to be John “Bucks” Royster is stopped by Officers Capter and DeChellis. Capter checks the registration and lets them go because there are three blacks in the car instead of two. He does this despite the fact that Carter is lying down (hiding) in the back seat and could not be seen from the street.
- 3:00 a.m. — After getting a more complete description of the getaway car, Officers Capter and DeChellis apprehend Carter and Artis and bring them to the murder scene for questioning.

DOCUMENTATION

- Original homicide report from the day of the murders showing the time of the crime (2:30) and the time it was reported (2:34) [View report](#).
- Newspaper report published on the the day of the crime. It says the murders occurred at 2:30 a.m. [Read story](#)
- Sworn testimony of Sergeant Capter, who pulled over Carter and Artis.
CAPTER: “Well, the first information we got was at 2:34 to look for a white car. ...That was from headquarters.” ...
Q (BY MR. HULL): “Then you stopped this particular car at about 2:40 a.m. at 14th Avenue and East 28th Street?”
CAPTER: “Yes,sir.”
- News story reporting that Carter’s key alibi witnesses lied about his whereabouts at the time of the murders [Story from 1976 trial]. Also see Carter’s 1967 jailhouse letter which outlines his alibi story for his alibi witnesses — the witnesses who later admitted perjury. [[View letter](#)]

The Racist Detective Was Out to Get Carter

THE MOVIE: Lt. Vincent Della Pesca is a profanity-spewing racist who is obsessed with nailing Rubin Carter. This obsession begins after the 11-year-old Carter is picked up for stabbing a white man, it intensifies when Della Pesca makes it clear he is going to “get” Carter for the triple murders, and it carries through to the day that Carter is released from prison — a hearing attended by the glowering racist detective.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: Lt. Della Pesca’s obsession led to the framing of Rubin Carter.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Carter is now backpedaling on this character. He now

says it is a “composite” designed to represent the racist system. But this alleged composite has a name strikingly similar to that of the real detective in the case:

FILM: Lt. Vincent Della Pesca

REAL: Lt. Vincent DeSimone

The real detective was a man who worked hard to maintain an excellent reputation. He was a religious man did not swear and he had no contact with Rubin Carter before the murders. He was a big teddy bear who was surprisingly sensitive, and was self-conscious about his appearance because he had been shot in the face during World War II.

On the day Carter was released from prison, Lt. DeSimone was not sitting in the courtroom — he had been dead for years and was probably turning over in his grave at the thought of Carter going free.

Eyewitness Al Bello Lied to Help Frame Carter

THE MOVIE: Al Bello is seen sitting in front of a tape recorder while the racist Lieutenant promises not to prosecute him for burglary and starts to ask him leading questions. Bello plays along with this and tells the detective that it was Rubin Carter he saw leaving the murder scene. Sitting behind Bello is Arthur Dexter Bradley, Bello’s burglary accomplice.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: That Bello falsely accused Carter to keep himself out of jail, and that Bello and Bradley coordinated their stories in a conspiracy with police.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Bello actually identified Carter to police eight days earlier, on Oct. 3, 1966. When Paterson Detective LaConte saw Bello’s car outside a bar, he went inside to talk. Bello was rattled because he had been threatened to keep his mouth shut. He told LaConte “You had the man and let him go,” and then said it was Rubin Carter. LaConte arranged for Bello to meet later that day with his boss, Paterson Police Sergeant Mohl. During that meeting, Bello again identified Carter.

Finally, they arranged for the taped meeting with Passaic County Detective Lt. Vincent DeSimone, in which Bello identified Carter for the third time. That was Oct. 11, 1966, and is the interview portrayed inaccurately in the film. [Read the complete transcript.] Other points:

- Bello did not know he was being taped during the interview, according to the Carter and Artis arrest report. The recorder was hidden. View page from police

- report (This report was given to Carter's attorney before the first trial.)
- Bradley was not sitting in the room; he was many miles away at the Bordentown Reformatory.
 - Bradley first identified Carter on Oct. 6, 1966 — five days BEFORE the taped interview with Bello. Bradley had been incarcerated since his August 3, 1966 arrest for armed robbery and other charges. He was serving time at the Bordentown Reformatory when he gave his statement to detectives. Although he had no opportunity to coordinate his story with Bello and had not seen him in months, their detailed stories about what happened that night were the same.
 - The burglary was unsuccessful, and police had no evidence of the attempt other than Bello's own testimony, which could not be used.
 - Any "promises" made to Bello were to ensure that his life would not be in danger if he testified against Carter. [Read the complete transcript.]
 - After Bello recanted his identification of Carter and Artis, the prosecutors played the entire tape recording in open court to discredit Bello's recantation.

Carter was Robbed of the Middleweight Boxing Title

THE MOVIE: Carter beats Middleweight Champ Joey Giardello to a puffy pulp, but the judges shock Carter by giving the victory to Giardello.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: Carter was robbed of the boxing title he deserved.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Here is how sports reporters who were there saw the fight (from a story by Wallace Matthews in The New York Post, January 2, 2000):

- Jerry Izenberg, Newark Star-Ledger: 10-5 Giardello
- Bob Lipsyte, New York Post, saw nothing wrong with the decision
- Jesse Abramson, a Hall of Fame writer, reported the ringside press agreed with the call by a 3-1 ratio.

To read Matthews' complete article and see videos of each round of the fight, go to <http://www.joeygiardello.com/>.

The Racist Bar

THE MOVIE: The Lafayette Grill, where the murders occurred, was a bar that welcomed blacks such as Louise and Avery Cockersham. Mrs. Cockersham says they even ran a tab at the bar.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: The prosecution's "racial revenge" theory is false. The prosecutors believed that the murderers went to a white bar where blacks weren't welcome to retaliate for the killing of a black man earlier in the evening. The black man was the stepfather of Carter's friend Eddie Rawls, and Carter and Rawls were together just before the killings at a black bar just a few blocks away. This is meant to discredit the theory that provided the motive for the killings.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Blacks were not served at the bar, according to Pat Valentine, who lived upstairs and knew all the people at the Lafayette Grill.

Louise and Avery Cockersham would come in the side door, pick up their drinks at the far end of the bar near the restrooms, pay their bill and leave, Valentine said (in January 2000).

In the 1970s, Betty Panagia, the owner of the bar, told me rather sheepishly that the bartender, Jim Oliver, was something of a racist. She and Oliver were seeing each other at the time of the killings. Oliver's spinal cord was severed by a shotgun blast.

Carter Rode in the Front Seat

THE MOVIE: It repeatedly shows Carter sitting up in the passenger seat as police stop his car 10 minutes after the murders. He's supposed to be on his way home from an innocent night out.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: Carter had nothing to hide, was not afraid to be seen and was acting normally.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Carter stayed out of sight by lying down on the back seat of the car. Was it because he knew he had just been seen leaving the murder scene by Bello and thought police would be looking for him? Or was this boxer in peak physical condition so tired from partying that he just had to lie down for the short ride home?

The man in the front seat was actually John "Bucks" Royster.

The Lily-White Jury Was In On The Plot

THE MOVIE: Carter's jury of his "peers" is so white that it evokes snickers from the audience. The whitest juror of them all gets up and delivers the "guilty" verdict with a subtle, self-satisfied sneer.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: Paterson's white racist justice system, aided and abetted by an all-white jury, unjustly convicted Carter.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Two blacks served on the jury in Carter's second trial, which is virtually ignored by the film. The jury was selected in Hudson County, not Passaic County where the crimes occurred.

Rubin Carter, the squeaky-clean soldier

who comes home from the service, orders a soda pop and falls in love in the film, was actually discharged after 21 months because of his "unfitness" for military service. That discharge followed four courts-martial. (Remember, Carter calls this movie "absolutely true.")

Young Rubin Stabbed an Attacker to Get Free

THE MOVIE: After defending a childhood pal from a molester, 11-year-old Rubin is grabbed by the man and lifted into the air. He stabs the man several times in the shoulder to get free.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: That brave Rubin was a good kid just doing what he had to do. This sequence is preceded by scenes focusing on the mean streets of Paterson, an apparent attempt to explain why an 11-year-old would be carrying a knife.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: On Feb. 4, 2000, Paul Mulshine reported in The Newark Star-Ledger:

"Onscreen, for example, [Carter] is sent to a reformatory as a young boy after breaking a bottle over the head of a child molester who is menacing his friend. In real life, he was sent to the reformatory for breaking a bottle over the head of a man from whom he stole a wristwatch and \$55.

"These two events have one thing in common — the bottle.

"This, apparently, is what 'based on a true story' means."

From the Saturday Evening Post, 1964:

"Rubin was a kind of schoolboy Mount Vesuvius — his early history is dotted with minor thefts, street fighting and school incorrigibility — before he erupted with a

vengeance at the age of 11 and was sent to Jamesburg reformatory for atrocious assault.

"That's right," he says, "atrocious assault at age eleven. I stuck a man with my knife. I stabbed him everywhere but the bottom of his feet."

Racist Cops Used Heavy-Handed Tactics

THE MOVIE: Police cars surround Carter's car as he's detained for questioning.

WHAT THIS IMPLIES: The racist cops were going to teach that you-know-what a thing or two with a show of force.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Officers Capter and DeChellis are the ones who brought Carter and Artis in for questioning. Capter testified that he had to get another squad car to help. "I pulled them [Carter and Artis] over to the side on Broadway and then I got another squad car to come over," he said. "I put the other squad car on East 18th Street facing in a northerly direction. I had Mr. Artis to turn his car around in order to follow the squad car over to East 18th and Lafayette Street [the Lafayette Grill]. I told the car in front to make a left turn off of 18th Street into Lafayette and they [Carter and Artis] were following him."

Elsewhere in the testimony, Capter refers to one other police car: "I asked them to turn the car around and follow the squad car."

HURRICANE' PROTEST REACHES THE ACADEMY'S FRONT DOOR

Murder victims' families send picketers to Hollywood to oppose Oscar for the false and hurtful film

VARIETY & THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER REFUSE AD FROM VICTIMS' FAMILIES

Universal reportedly contacts media outlets to muzzle "No Oscar for Hurricane" effort.

Read APB.com's coverage | See the censored ad online

VICTIMS' FAMILIES CONDEMN A HURTFUL FILM

Published Feb. 9, 2000 N.Y. DAILY NEWS: 'Hurricane' Foes Fight Back — In this corner, kin of victims say Carter is guilty. Read story.

THE WASHINGTON POST (AP): Victims Protest 'The Hurricane.' Read story.

NEWARK STAR-LEDGER: Children of the slain pan 'Hurricane.' Read story.

THE BERGEN RECORD: 'Hurricane' reopens old wounds. Read story.

N.J. HERALD & NEWS: Storm Over 'The Hurricane.' Read story.

PLUS: Debra DeSimone releases her 1998 "goodbye" letter to her late father to counter the impact of the movie. Read letter.

A tribute to Lt. DeSimone by his son: "My father was the ultimate honest cop." Includes comments on the movie. Read letter.

OTHER CRITICISM OF NORMAN JEWISON'S FALSUMENTARY

LA TIMES: Will This Fight End With a TKO? The punches exchanged over 'The Hurricane' could hurt the film's Oscar chances. Read story.

N.Y. DAILY NEWS: The Storm Over 'The Hurricane': As Academy prepares to vote, critics say script takes liberties. Read story.

MSNBC: More Foul Winds Around 'The Hurricane.' View Jeannette Walls' story.

MSNBC: Storm brewing over "The Hurricane." View Jeannette Walls's story.

MIAMI HERALD: "The Hurricane" maligns their father, DeSimone's children say. **Story, 1/30/00**

"The movie disregards or distorts virtually every fact of the case." Read Paul Mulshine's excellent, point-by-point column in the **Newark Star-Ledger, 1/13/00**

"The movie is a distortion of the truth," says the judge who presided over Carter's second trial. Plus: Families react. **Bergen Record, 1/9/00**

"'Hurricane' Slurs the Name of An Honest Man" Another terrific column by Paul Mulshine of The Star-Ledger in Newark. Read the column.

BOXER REBELLION

Boxer Joey Giardello is upset about the movie, and his web site has some interesting articles about the case.

Could-a Been the Champion of the World??? Carter's boxing record was 7-7-1 in 1965-'66. View chart.

"The Real Freakin' Story of The Hurricane from cyberboxingzone.com, which looks at his boxing career. Excerpt: People "are blown away when I tell them the real story of "The Hurricane" & his boxing career as opposed to the claptrap of the film. And what's even more astounding is that after I tell them the real details of Carter's life & career they don't wanna believe me ... They'd rather believe in the movie & Dylan's song because that makes them feel all warm & fuzzy." [Caution: Profanity]