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Anti-Obama DVD floods local mailboxes

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By **Jim Stratton**, Orlando Sentinel
6:48 p.m. EDT, October 18, 2012

A conservative, California-based filmmaker said this week that his company is distributing more than a million free copies of a conspiracy-laden **DVD** that claims much of what the public knows about President **Barack Obama's** early life is false.

The movie — called "Dreams From My Real Father" — began appearing in Central Florida mailboxes sometime last week.

It is the work of Joel Gilbert, a director whose other movies have focused on everything from militant Islam to **Bob Dylan** to **Elvis Presley**. He said the DVD is being sent to swing states, including Florida and Ohio, but would not say who is financing the project or how much the distribution costs.

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Gilbert's central — and widely denounced — claim is that Obama's father was not a Kenyan named Barack Obama but a black poet and journalist named **Frank Marshall** Davis. Marshall was a labor activist investigated in the 1940s and 1950s for ties to the American Communist Party.

Gilbert contends Davis and Ann Dunham — the president's mother — had a secret relationship when they were living in Hawaii, and that Dunham's family covered it up when she became pregnant.

Ultimately, Gilbert alleges, Obama discovered who his "true" father was. The men developed a relationship, Gilbert said, and the president's "biological father" became his "ideological father."

The movie is the latest entry in a stream of Obama-centric conspiracies produced by the far right. Like the others, the project is long on conjecture. In the film's opening, Gilbert acknowledges the movie is based, in part, on "re-creations of probable events, using reasoned logic and approximated conversations ..."

Obama biographer David Maraniss called the movie "preposterous." Maraniss, a **Pulitzer Prize-winning** reporter, said it is "depressing to have so much fictional, unreported, conspiratorial, unhistorical stuff floating around."

"This DVD is the worst of the bunch," he wrote in an email, "which is saying something."

The movie has also been dissected by an Atlanta attorney named Loren Collins. Collins has blogged extensively about the film, concluding, "It's just complete bunk."

Notably, erotic photos that Gilbert claims Davis took of Dunham in 1960 — photos the filmmaker uses to establish a relationship — were actually published in a magazine two years before Dunham arrived in Hawaii.

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Collins said the woman in the photos is a model who resembles Ann Dunham.

The film also highlights a book by Davis that contains passages describing his relationship with a young woman named "Ann." Gilbert claims it's a reference to Obama's mother, but Collins said that's false.

"If you read the whole book," said Collins, "you discover 'Ann' was a 13-year-old Jamaican girl."

Collins said he is a conservative libertarian who does not support Obama politically. But he has spent the past few years debunking so-called "birther" conspiracies — which claim Obama was not born in the U.S. — because he

fears they hurt the conservative cause.

"I just hate seeing those smears associated with my side of the political spectrum," he said.

In an email, Gilbert says Collins is citing "incorrect magazine publishing dates," though a video Collins posted online shows otherwise. Gilbert did not address Collins' questions about the identity of "Ann."

Gilbert's earlier work includes two films that are identified on his website as "spoofs/mockumentaries." One contends Elvis is still alive, while the other claims **Paul McCartney** is dead.

Gilbert insists the Obama film, which also alleges that the president's grandfather was a **CIA** operative, is a serious documentary. Collins considers it something else entirely.

"Typical conspiracist nonsense," he said.

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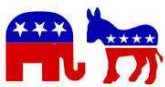
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