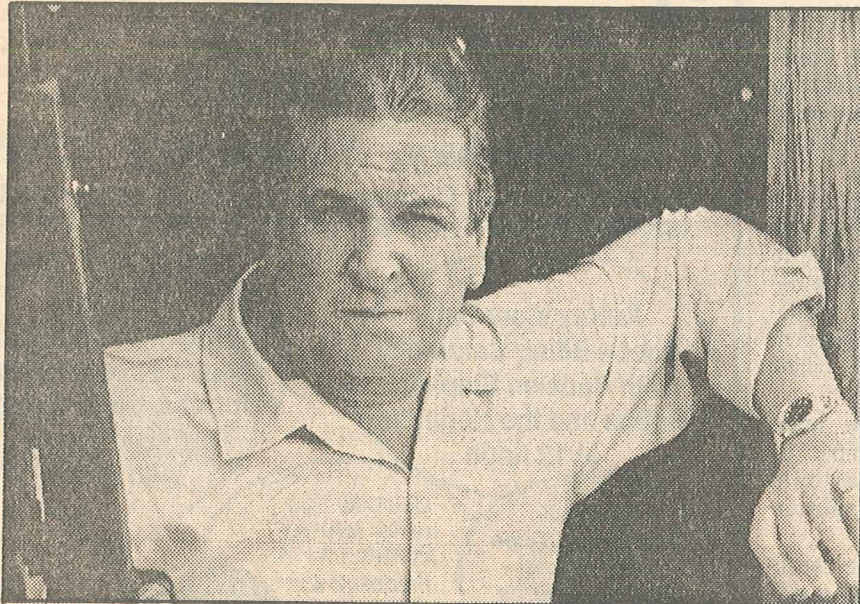


The Reliable Source

By Lois Romano



'Ruby': A Movie Scripted for Success?

If this keeps up, studio publicists are going to be looking for work. The producers of the film "Ruby"—about the man who shot Lee Harvey Oswald—have hired a high-powered political PR firm to handle the film's March release, rather than merely relying on studio publicity.

Frank Mankiewicz of Hill & Knowlton was recently enlisted to devise a similar strategy for Oliver Stone's high-cost "JFK" and John Sayles's low-budget "City of Hope."

Publicist Michelle Abbrecht of the Samuel Goldwyn Co., distributor of the Sayles film, says Sayles turned to the

pricey Hill & Knowlton to get political columnists "to listen with a different ear."

For "Ruby," Josh Baran of Edelman Public Relations has arranged a series of screenings for political writers, including one in New York for reporters covering the John Gotti trial. "Ruby," which stars Danny Aiello, examines the deceased Dallas nightclub owner's possible ties to the mob and the CIA.

"The whole idea is to expand the audience," said Baran, who also handled "The Last Temptation of Christ" and "Do the Right Thing."

"It's like getting the message reviewed," said Hill & Knowlton's Mark Robertson, "not just the entertainment."
—with Joe Pichirallo in Los Angeles

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Danny Aiello, left, in "Ruby."