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Stone's 'J.F.K.' Set for Holiday Release

Warner Bros. is upping the stakes of the important holiday moviegoing season by scheduling director Oliver Stone's controversial "J.F.K.," starring Kevin Costner, for wide release Dec. 20.

A source close to Stone, who is still editing the three-hour movie about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, said the decision reflects "a sense of confidence and a roll of the dice for a serious film at the Christmas season."

The movie focuses on former New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison (Costner), whose conspiracy theory regarding Kennedy's murder brought him national notoriety.

Until now, Warner Bros. had not committed to an opening date.

"It now appears that after several weeks of seven-day work weeks, it will be ready, and there will be time for a minimum of 800 prints to be made," said the source.

One goal will be to have at least one print by Dec. 13, which is the cut-off date for several film critics' groups to vote on their choices for best films of the year, often a barometer for Oscar nominations.

—DAVID J. FOX