

STONE ATTACKS SCRIBES' 'JFK' BASHING AT NAT'L PRESS CLUB

BY DENNIS WHARTON

WASHINGTON — "JFK" director Oliver Stone yesterday went on the attack at the National Press Club against top journalists who have criticized his film as propaganda, claiming D.C. is "the wrong city to ridicule people who believe in conspiracies."

Many historians and journalists, Stone complained, have chosen to

"close ranks, criticize and vilify" him for not accepting the "truly absurd" account of the Kennedy assassination put forth by the Warren Commission.

Stone singled out CBS anchor Dan Rather, New York Times columnists Tom Wicker and Anthony Lewis, Washington Post reporter George Lardner and syndicated columnist George Will—five journalists who have trashed "JFK" for

Turn to page 60

STONE ATTACKS SCRIBES FOR 'JFK' BASHING AT NAT'L PRESS CLUB MEET

Continued from page 3

its alleged distortions—for not questioning the validity of the Warren Commission report.

"When confronted with the crime of the century, they stand mute," said Stone.

Sarcastically, he asked, "How much work has the sage of Bethesda—George Will—done in the 20 years he has been a columnist to try to uncover the answers to some of the dark secrets in Dallas '63? Will Tom Wicker and Dan Rather spend their retirement years examining closely the possibility of a second or a third gunman, or will they content themselves with savaging those who do?"

"What 'JFK' has brought out is that those who talk the most of history have no commitment to it, either," said Stone.

Stone said he made the film "to make people think and re-examine their history." He said he "tried to create a stall in the marketplace of ideas" and has offered a "version of what might have happened."

Later, when asked whether his art differs from propaganda, Stone replied, "Good question. I'm not sure I can answer that." He then said he has "always said this film is a hypothesis."

The director said he is "very proud" the film has prompted Congress to reconsider opening government files on the Kennedy assassination that were intended to remain sealed until the year 2029. Rep. Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), chairman of a House committee that investigated the assassination, has hinted he might seek to open the files in light of the interest spawned in the documents by "JFK."

Stone defended Jim Garrison, the New Orleans district attorney who pursued the Kennedy assassination. Garrison, said Stone, "took on the establishment and paid a heavy price."

Stone was asked whether he would ever "take on" the press in a film. "That's a great subject," he said, "and possibly I will."