STONE PREPPING TWO PIX UNDER RENEWED NRF PACT

BY JUDY BRENNAN

CANNES—Oliver Stone clinched his relationship with Arnon Milchan and his Warner Bros.-based New Regency Films Saturday, announcing two new films with the renewal of their pact.

Stone will direct and produce the new pix, which comprise another Vietnam vehicle, "Heaven & Earth," and "South Central," centering on a black man's struggle to keep his son out of gang life in South Central Los Angeles.

"Heaven & Earth" is a work Stone wrote, pulled together from two novels—"Child of War" and "Women of Peace." It is about several generations of Vietnamese women growing up during the French, American and civil wars in Vietnam. The film will start lensing throughout the Far East in September, according to Stone.

Although he hasn't begun casting, Stone says he plans to use "unknown" actors in "Heaven & Earth"—"no stars."

Although Stone admits "South Central" is an incredibly timely film in light of the recent surge of violence in L.A., he noted that the project has been in the works for several years.

"This is a very emotional piece about a father who goes to prison, who reels his son out of gang life. It is a very realistic representation of what is happening in America right now," he told the foreign press.

The comments triggered repetitive questions about the ongoing violence in the U.S.—particularly in L.A.—sparked after the not-guilty verdicts were issued in the Rodney King police brutality case.

"This film will be different," he said when asked if "South Central" could rekindle the violence. "'Boyz N the Hood' ended on a violent note. This ends on a positive note. The media in America always emphasizes the negative, but in reality 90% of the stories end in a positive way."

He was asked repeatedly about "JFK" and efforts to reopen the files on the Kennedy assassination investigation. Stone, appropriately, retained his perch on the soapbox.

"The (U.S.) Justice Dept. has stonewalled reopening of these files. The legislature in my country should have oversight, but the executive branch of our government has control over that," he said.

"They say we have a democracy, but we have no access to the files. It's a symbol of fascism—this fact that the government can sit on these files" and prevent public review. "It has also been said that MLK's (Martin Luther King) death was a conspiracy and that there are files which no one can see until 2029.

"My question is what to do now. Do we need to make a film on MLK?" Stone chided.

"JFK" was a collaboration be-

Turn to page 15

5/18/92

Stone preps 2 pix under NRF pact

Continued from page 13

tween Stone and Milchan after Stone had abandoned his previous relationship with Carolco Pictures, following the indie's highly publicized financial woes.

For nearly half a year, a formal partnership between Stone's Ixtlan Prods. and Milchan's Regency had been speculated, which ended with the announcement during the film festival here Saturday.

As for his upcoming projects, several reporters asked why he was making another Vietnam-related film, after "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July."

"John Ford made westerns. I make Vietnamers!" he quipped.

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