

# CONGRESS ON STONE'S GIFT LIST

## 'JFK' vids to pols part of 'free the files' campaign

BY JOSEPH McBRIDE

Warner Home Video is planning to distribute videocassettes of Oliver Stone's "JFK" to all members of Congress on May 20, the day of the film's homevideo release. The move is part of an ongoing lobbying effort to pass a bill mandating the release of still-secret government files on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Also on May 20, Motion Picture Assn. of America president Jack Valenti, a former aide to President Lyndon B. Johnson, is scheduled to testify in favor of the bill before the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Rep. Jack Brooks (D-Texas). Both Valenti and Brooks were riding in the Kennedy motorcade at the time of the assassination in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

"I'm for letting everything get open," Valenti told *Daily Variety* yesterday in a telephone interview from Austin, Texas, where he was attending a board meeting of the LBJ Foundation. "I'm going to be passionately suggesting every shred of paper should be released for public scrutiny."

Stone told *Daily Variety* Wednesday that he thinks Valenti, who has attacked "JFK" as "a monstrous charade about President Johnson," may be trying to "upstage" the video release by testifying the same day, but Valenti denied that. He said he had not known when the film was being released on video when Brooks invited him to testify.

Valenti said he has no plans to repeat his attacks on the film before Brooks' subcommittee, but

said he stands by his recent seven-page statement that compared "JFK" to the Nazi propaganda film "Triumph of the Will" (*Daily Variety*, April 3).

He said yesterday that the film's accusation that Johnson was involved in an assassination conspiracy and cover-up is "the most heinous accusation you can make against a human being."

Noting that "JFK" compares the assassination coverup to Hitler's use of the "Big Lie" technique, Stone replied to Valenti's com-

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MPAA president Jack Valenti

ments by saying, "I think he's inverted the language—it's Orwellian language. He's taken the word 'Nazi' and applied it to me. He's part of the problem that exists in this country, which is fascism."

"Part of fascism is when the government decides the legislative branch can't see files. We the people have little access to the files. I call that fascism."

"I'm not debating any more with Oliver Stone," Valenti said yesterday when asked about the issue. "I've said all I have to say about the matter. I do not have a vendetta against anybody."

Although Valenti said he was too far back in the motorcade to hear

the gunshots in Dealey Plaza, he added, "I'm convinced there was no second gunman, and I'm convinced generally speaking that the Warren Commission gave the final account on this."

Details still are being finalized about the delivery of the two-part "JFK" tape to congressmen, but Stone told *Daily Variety* it's possible the double tape of "JFK" will be delivered in a "file" with a key to dramatize the need to open the files.

Messengers will deliver the tapes to the congressmen, and the soon-to-be-published "JFK: The Book of the Film" (Applause Books), may be included if the book is ready in time. The book includes an annotated copy of the script by Stone and Zachary Sklar, giving documentation on each allegation made in the film.

The next congressional hearing on the jointly offered House and Senate bill to open the files is slated for Tuesday before the Senate Committee on Government Operations, chaired by Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio). FBI director William Sessions, CIA director Robert Gates and a rep of the Justice Department are expected to testify.

The Justice Department has objected to the bill, contending it violates the constitutional doctrine of separation of powers. The bill proposes that the judiciary appoint a commission to screen the assassination documents for release, but the Justice Department wants the commission to be appointed by the president.

Frank Mankiewicz, the former Robert Kennedy aide who is handling matters for Stone in D.C., said yesterday, "The question is whether that's the real issue or whether it masks a desire by the administration to keep the files secret. The hearing on (Tuesday) will be a pretty good tipoff of whether the administration is serious or whether it is blocking the release."

Asked yesterday if President Bush might veto the bill, a White House spokeswoman said, "There won't be any statement of administration policy until after the vote."