Ms. Elaine Dutka
Los Angeles Times, Calendar
Los Angeles, CA

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21702
7/14/91

Dear Ms. Dutka, Please read last page first.

Yesterday's receipt of your "Oliver Stone Fights Back" story of June 24 is still another illustraion of how an utterly unscrupulous quotable man like Oliver Stone can and does con experienced and sophisticated reporters.

As he has to so many once he knew his crass commercialization and exploitation of the JFK assassination was to be criticized, he simply lied and misrepresented to you.

Exposure of the indecency on which he is engaged is not from "the establishment," which with a reported $40,000,000 of Warner Brothers money, among other things, he represents, not as he alleged to the Washington Post, from its CIA reporter, George Lardner, a gross lie. It started with me.

And in the normal sense, I am anything but spokesman for the establishment. I am the author of the first book analyzing the Warren Report, dating to February, 1965, of six books on the JFK assassination and one of that of Dr. King, and I've filed about a dozen FOIA suits against various government agencies, several involving precedents and one resulting in the amending of the Act in 1974 to open FBI, CIA and similar records to the public.

Stone knows this criticism starts with me from my February 10 letter to him when I learned that he was using Jim Garrison's outrageous and not infrequently knowingly false attempt at self-justification as the basis of his movie. Since then he has had a variety of semi-denials of this and has simply made up his responses to press inquiries, suiting each fabrication to serve his perceived immediate need, without regard to fact or truth.

One of Stone's poses is that his rights are being intruded upon. This is false. He began promoting this travesty to coincide with his promotion of then just-released "Doors." More than three months later he was still saying that his film is to tell the people the "history" of the great tragedy, "who" did it, "why" and "how." Everything he has done in making this movie is carefully designed to make it appear that he is in fact filming an exact duplication of those events.

Stone can't now withdraw this disgusting and knowingly false representation nor can he remove it from the minds of those who will view his rewriting of that history in a disgustly fictional misrepresentation of it. He tries, of course, as in telling you "This isn't history, this is moviemaking."

Based on what he I presume told you, you wrote "Stone spent three years digesting material on the subject." In earlier versions he said that his film is based on everything that has come to light in 28 years, one variant being that he has added all that came to light in the 20 years after Garrison, without mentioning that Garrison was an unfactual fiasco.

The simplest way I have of showing you that is an outrageous lie is that I have about

a quarter of a million pages of those government records he has repeatedly protested are suppressed until at the earliest 2039, all those he regards as "experts" as does everyone doing any work in the field, no matter how nutty and irresponsible knows I make these records available to anyone, and Stone and his assorted flunkies and "experts" have not asked to see them.

What Stone is talking about that tryting people like you have no way of knowing in saying he "spent three years digesting material on the subject" is that he has been exclusively interested in the unproven, undependable, usually incredible and impossible theories of the assassination. He has and had had in all those three and more years not the slightest interest in fact or in documentation. He is producing a work of fiction, the cheapest and most indecent rewriting of a painful history, but he has regularly represented it as I quote directly about, as a work based on truthful "material" and faithful to that history. Neither Oliver Stone not anyone else is entitled to have it both ways.

He knew at the latest on receipt of my February 10 letter, quite some time before he began filming, that Garrison's book was a disgusting and false self-justification having not even an indirect association with reality. Yet he persisted in filming it. (He has not, by the way, responded to that letter or the one I wrote him after his Washington Post article in which it is another of his endless lies to say that he made a "point-by-point refutation" of it. He repeated the assorted inventions and provided nothing but his own utterly worthless word in support of anything. If you would like copies of what I sent him and he has ignored, I'll be glad to send it.)

Those he refers to as "respected scholars" or "experts" are in fact those who made up these silly and mislead and not once proven, usually impossible theories. He boasts often of adding Jimm Marrs' "Crossfire" to Garrison's book. Except when literally Marrs plagiarizes he has trouble being faithful to those zany theories in his large compendium of them. So much of what he has added is not merely false, it is ludicrous. Yet Stone, save as with you when it serves his interest to pretend that he is preparing only a fictional entertainment, represents these outrageous impositions on the tyrst of a still sorrowing people as his filming of the truth, of our actual history.

I do not presume that you or the Times have the interest in this that I have, which I'll explain, but in the event you and the paper do not like being imposed upon by Stone in his use of you to further exploit and commercialize this great tragedy, I have a few suggestions. Ask him to give you a list of those he describes as "respected researchers" and I'll document that they have less to do with fact about the assassination than a clove of garlic merely wafted over the stew. I know of some and this is true of them.

(I apologize for my typing. I'm 78, must keep my legs elevated when I type, and I thus have the typwriter to the side and I can't do better than this.)

Most of those to whom I pjemit unrestricted access to these FOIA records are those

with whom I know in advance I will not agree. This is easily established if you have such an interest by the separate file I created in an effort to leave an accurate account of this turning-point in our history of the exploitations and commercializationa of the 25th anniversary of it. They are all together and we are only a little more than an hour from your Washington bureau, closer to parts of northwest Washington and some suburbs.

I notice a few more matters in your story. One is, "Im going beyond Garrison, assembling a jigsaw puzzle of facts that have surfaced since the trial." This refers to Garrison's ruin of an innocent man, Clay Shaw. Stone referred to that as a minor incident to the New Orleans papers! Stone also refers to his Rashomon approach.

I have read the script based on which he latched onto Warner's $40,000,000. There is no "fact" in it and no such approach. The concept of varying solutions, excuse the word, came when he was aware of the serious and truthful criticism of his indecency and obscenity of palming off anything based on Garrison and Marrs as our real history.

His script even included some of the fabrications of Ricky White who concocted a transparently false story that his father was an assassin - even after White was exposed as a fraud and liar! (Not that the assemblage of Dallas nuts to whom Stone paid a reported $80,000 to act as his experts did not persist in representing White's fable as true after it was proven worse than untrue-impossible.)

Stone has been coldly calculating in his commercialization. Besides those nuts he palms off as "researchers" so he can trade on their names he has signed a number of stars whose name he does trade on, like Ed Asner, for what are essentially bits parts. I know that not one can have a significant part from the script and it is not possible to rewrite the script and make any major changes that can eliminate this. He'd have to junk it and start all over to do that. This is apparent from the identification of those with the major roles. There is nothing left but bit parts. But Stone is paying them reportedly considerable sums for a mere appearance so he can exploit their reputations. As he has already done in what he wrote copies of which I have. (Would people like Asner, appear if ....)

If Stone had not so strongly and persistently represented that he is filming our history and in other ways commercialized the representation that he is telling the people the truth, he'd have a right to film anything he wants. Having made the representations I quote, he has forfeited that right. He has no right at all to lie and misreprent and tell the people he is telling them their history and then claim immunity to criticism until criticism serves no point at all, until he has reached the largest audience with the largest false account since the Warren Commission.

As with his script, his clear record is making it up as he goes, unable to tell the truth even by accident, and as long as he can get away with imposing upon the trust of reporters and newspapers he will not only get away with it -he'll be selling tickets to

his obscenity in advance.

If you or the Times have any interest in learning whether Stone's word is worth anything at all I propose a simple means of satisfying yourself.

One of the fictions in what he told you is his "point-by-point" refutation of George Gardner's accurate exposure of what Stone is up to has to do with those he refers to as "hoboes." Garrison invented their identification as "tramps." When as Stone knows from my letters to him that Garrison was about to commemorate the fifth JFK assassination anniversary by charging a man he claims is in pictures of them with no other evidence at all and that is false and a man who had killed himself in 1962 with being additional assassins and to prevent another monstrous outrage by him I had to and did investigate the pictures on which this absolutely crazy matter was based on I had to learn the truth about those pictures based on which Garrison's imagination soared. After being correctly informed by me Stone, offering no support at all, said those men where taken from a railroad coach directly behind the book-depository building a few minutes after the crime. Those pictures belong to the Dallas papers. I got my copies back yesterday. It is apparent from the shadows that it was not merely minutes after the assassination. It is obvious that the police did not regard them as having any involvement because not one is handcuffed and not an officer has a gun unholstered. They were in fact winos, they were found a block west of the depository building and more than two blocks south of it at least an hour and a half after the assassination, drinking away in a parked railroad boxcar. They were not arrested because they were only drunks. They were photographed only because walking them past the building was the only way of walking them off the railroad tracks. The photographers were shooting pictures, naturally enough, of everything that moved.

To block the frightful thing Garrison was about to do in November, 1968 - and I have my copies of the work I did that did block it and did get him to fire Boxley, whose crime was inventing what he knew Garrison wanted -I was able to have two independent investigations made by professional investigators. They yielded identical results: the men were only winos.

Now it happens that those same pictures were misused in the fictions created around the King assassination. I informed, with copies of the pictures, our local FBI resident agent, he informed his Baltimore main office, it asked the Dallas office to conduct an investigation, and that also independent investigation destroys Stone's mythology and supports the work done by real professionals for me.

I cite this as typical of Stone and the dependance that reporters like you and papers like the Times can place on almost anything he says.

He is caught in an enormous fraud, in a terrible travesty, he got all that money from Warners, and he is very worried that when the truth gets enough distribution his reputation and Warner's money will be shot. Sincerely, Harold Weisberg

Please excuse me for not rewiting this letter but at the moment I'm not up to it. I'm sorry for the lack of clarity - did not perceive until correcting it and for having omitted a few things.

To the best of my knowledge I am alone among those generally lumped together as "critics" of the official assassination "solution," and what that does not include! who is not a theory advocate of some kind or another. There is no theory in any one of my books and when it was possible and worth the effort for me now I debunk them.

Whether or not there was a conspiracy, which is a matter of fact. not of theory, as Garrison, Stone, Marrs et al have it, is quite separate from who may have conspired. Here they run amok, saying there is a vast conspiracy involving to begin with the FBI, the CIA, the "military-industrial complex" and who can tell how many may be added by the time the movie is out.

There is no factual basis at all for this conspiracy theorizing. I'll explain this if you'd like. Without having established on the basis of fact that there was a conspiracy it is even more deceptive, misleading and irresponsible to tell the people who (allegedly) conspired. The net result, and this is one of my major objections to what Stone et al are up to, is they will deceive, mislead and misinform. A second objection is that this serves to undermine the credibility of legitimate, factual criticism. It thus serves to justify all that was wrong with what officialdom did and did not do.

And it buries truth even more deeply while imposing upon the trust of the people.

I should also have told you that I began with a background of experience that is unlike that of these theorizers. I was a reporter, investigative reporter, Senate investigator and editor and in OSS was an analyst and trouble-shooter investigator.

I have not singled Stone out. When the House Select Committee on Assassinations was playing the same kind of unseemly game with reality I was the credited and uncredited source of expose by George Lardner on the Post, Wendell Rawls and others on the New York Times, several whose names I've forgotten on the St. Louis Post Dispatch, and I'm sure of others I do not now recall.

Also, the copy of the script I have was not stolen. It was made from one of the innumerable copies Stone gave out.

ENTERTAINMENT / THE ARTS / TV LISTINGS

CALENDAR

Los Angeles Times

Oliver Stone Fights Back

■ Movies: His 'JFK' is still being filmed but critics are already assailing its accuracy and motives. 'This isn't history, this is moviemaking,' the director rejoins—and star Kevin Costner agrees.

By ELAINE DUTKA
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Aubrey Rike is a former funeral parlor worker, the man who, in November, 1963, put President John F. Kennedy's slain body into the casket at Parkland Hospital. Today, he's a Dallas policeman who was recently hired as a consultant on Oliver Stone's latest project "JFK"—a dramatic exploration of the assassination, which the director calls "the seminal event of our generation."

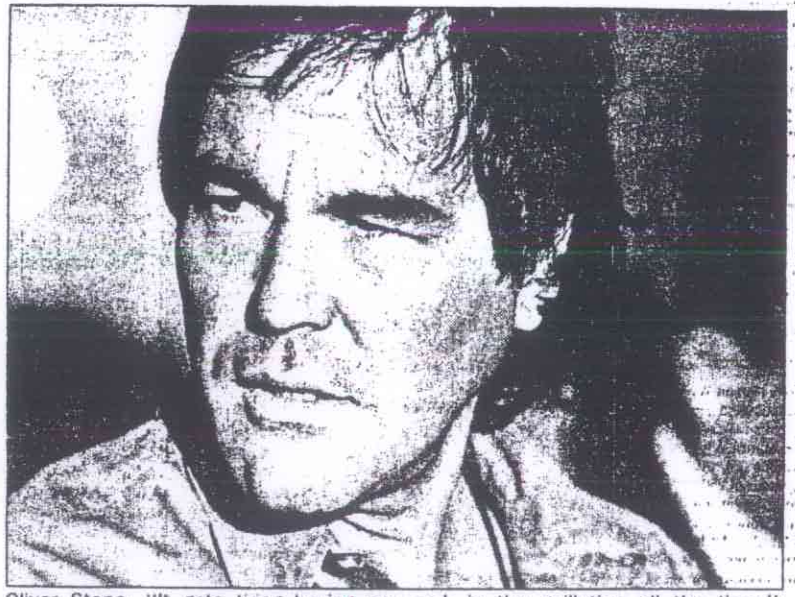
At one point, Rike recalls, he pointed out a couple of minor factual errors in the way Stone was setting up a scene: Mrs. Kennedy had not been in the emergency room at a given time; her clothes were less blood-stained.

"This isn't history, this is moviemaking," Stone pointed out. "I'm not setting out to make a documentary."

Rike ultimately conceded the director's point, but others have been more judgmental. For halfway through the film's shoot and six months before it is scheduled to be released by Warner Bros., a number of publications have condemned both "JFK" and its director.

The Chicago Tribune, Washington Post and Time magazine, basing their stories on a leaked early version of the shooting script, criticized Stone for purported factual inaccuracies, including the implication of an orchestrated *coup d'état* and cover-up. And he's been criticized for basing his

Please see STONE, F12



Oliver Stone: "It gets tiring having my neck in the guillotine all the time."

new movie proves that he has passed that point. But then, so has Time-Warner [parent company to both the film's distributor, Warner Bros. Pictures, and Time magazine], and so will anyone who pays American money to see the film."

Such attacks, says Zachary Sklar, editor of the Garrison book "On the Trail of the Assassins" and co-author with Stone of the screenplay, are patently unfair. "The great majority of Americans believe there was more than one gunman," he notes. "A congressional committee in 1979 found that Kennedy was 'probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy.' Yet from Day 1, Oliver has been riding on the Titanic. Assassination buffs see him as a Johnny-come-lately who hasn't done his homework. The press is forcing him to work in a fishbowl. And giving away the thesis of his film before it's made is like giving away the ending of a mystery book in a review. It may not be illegal, but it's certainly not acceptable practice."

Stone, distressed about the circulation of "pirated scripts," had his lawyers send out letters threatening legal action against those suspected of disclosing their contents or using them in any way. "A script is a private document . . . not the Pentagon Papers," the director explains. "Who has the right to quote it out of context and review it as part of a national news story? If people want to steal something, at least let them go after the sixth draft, which is what we're shooting now."

Costner maintains that there have been substantial changes since the early days. "I've seen Oliver erase a lot of things that didn't turn out to be true, kill a lot of [scenes he was fond of] and took a long time to create. And, as an actor, I object to the press revealing plot developments, printing entire speeches. I want to perform Garrison's closing argument in its virginal form so people can be moved by it—or think it's bullshit. No one has the right to ruin this movie for others."

Carl Oglesby, a founder of the Assassination Information Bureau who's working on a "JFK" piece for the Boston Globe, says he believes that the debate—internal and external—is bound to escalate. "What we're seeing is the beginning of an enormous row on the level of popular culture," he says. "After all these years, the question of who killed John Kennedy is still a very impassioned one, and people, setting themselves up as experts, are saying that it can't be addressed from certain standpoints. But since the government, thus far, hasn't told the truth, artists have to fill in the blanks."

Robert Spiegelman, a professor of mass communications and sociology who served as a technical adviser on the Stone movie, claims there's a lot more at stake than the fate of this film. "This outcry is a continuation of the assault on the 'L-word,' the liberal values and tradition which Camelot and Kennedy—and these days Oliver Stone—symbolize," he claims, "and it constitutes a very dangerous precedent. Films critical of the official version of history aren't abundant as it is. If Stone's work can be targeted, imagine the chilling effect it can have on others without his clout and financial backing."