

'J.F.K.' Substance and Style Criticized

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owned by Time Warner, HBO said. Warner Brothers is producing "J.F.K."

Mr. Stone and Creative Artists deny that any pressure was put on Mr. Joanou. And Mr. Joanou said: "This whole thing has been blown way out of proportion. I was sent the script of 'Libra.' I found the subject matter interesting. I was toying with the idea." But after reading a rewritten version of the screenplay, Mr. Joanou said, "I felt this wasn't the right film for me."

A Different Topic

The director said that he had met Mr. Stone but that they largely discussed a coming project together, "Panama," about the Noriega regime. "On 'Libra,'" Mr. Joanou said, "the only thing we discussed was whether Oswald was the lone assassin. Oliver feels he wasn't. Everyone thinks Oliver prevented 'Libra' from getting made. It's the most absurd thing I've ever heard."

A widely heard report was that Creative Artists called HBO to stop the film, but Robert Cooper, a senior vice president of HBO Pictures, said that although the company consid-

ered doing it, "we heard our sister company, Warner's, was releasing 'J.F.K.' in December and at that point we realized it was foolish to compete." Creative Artists also denies putting pressure on HBO.

Mr. Stone has also been embroiled in a dispute involving a third film connected to the assassination. The movie "Ruby," starring Danny Aiello as Jack Ruby, was filmed in Dallas

Oliver Stone is accused of upsetting other Kennedy films.

and was to be released early next year. Its producer, Joni Sighvatsson, and director, John Mackenzie, have contended that Mr. Stone made sure that any film project about the assassination would not have access to important Dallas locations or be able to hire actors used in "J.F.K." until long after the Stone film was released. The movie is being produced by Propaganda Films, which has made successful commercials and

film videos and David Lynch's "Wild at Heart."

Mr. Stone vehemently denies these charges and says the criticisms come from "cry-baby sources." Speaking of the Ruby film as well as of "Libra," he says: "I can't tell you how many pictures I've been beaten out of. I wanted to do a civil rights movie, but Alan Parker got there first with 'Mississippi Burning.' I don't cry over it. This is a very competitive business."

Warner Brothers, meanwhile, has taken the unusual step of hiring Frank Mankiewicz, the Washington public-relations executive and former campaign manager for Robert F. Kennedy, to promote the film and seek support in the news media for Mr. Stone. Last week, Mr. Stone flew to Washington and had dinner with representatives from The New York Times, The Washington Post, People magazine and CBS.

Mr. Stone's associates said that Mr. Mankiewicz was hired partly because he has been identified with the Kennedy family and partly because the news media have criticized Mr. Stone's defense of Mr. Garrison's conspiracy theories.

"I'm trying to present a legitimate position for Oliver in light of some of the sensational and hostile stuff about him," Mr. Mankiewicz said.