

COUNSEL'S LATEST SCORN OF 'JFK' LEAVES STONE UNTURNED

BY JOSEPH MCBRIDE

"Since when does the Warren Commission comment on the Academy Awards?" a bemused Oliver Stone wondered yesterday, responding to assistant commission counsel David W. Belin's criticism of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences for giving "JFK" eight Oscar nominations.

Belin, whose latest of several attacks on the film came Saturday in a N.Y. Times op-ed piece, accused Stone's film of "slander and char-

acter assassination" against Earl Warren, Lyndon B. Johnson and others and expressed alarm over "JFK's" prospects of winning an Oscar.

"For Hollywood to give any Academy Award to this massive misrepresentation of truth and character assassination of Earl Warren," wrote Belin, "would be vivid evidence of the depths to which Hollywood's standards of integrity, truth and justice have fallen."

Stone retorted, "The Warren Commission deserves the worst-picture (award) for unbelievability, bad acting and bitterness over past losses. Mr. Belin is a frustrated prosecutor, having tried a case 28 years ago and then failing to convince the American public and refusing to bow out gracefully."

Belin's article follows earlier attacks on the film he wrote for New York magazine, the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post (the latter with Warren Commission member and former U.S.

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President Gerald Ford).

Belin also has written two books defending the commission's contention that Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy.

His latest commentary was prompted by yesterday's issuance of a postage stamp honoring Chief Justice Warren, whose commission was blasted by Stone for covering up what the film calls a "coup d'etat" by elements of the U.S. government against Kennedy.

Belin also was bothered by W.B.'s mailing of a "JFK" study guide to high schools and colleges, a document he said is intended "to spread the disinformation of 'JFK' into our public schools, in effect brainwashing students through the power of a commercial film and rewriting history the Hollywood way."

Calling Belin "a hollow sham," Stone said his criticism of the Oscar nominations for the film "can only help ('JFK'), because of his hysteria."

"He points up the thing the film

has achieved—it has raised questions and created a climate to open up the files and clean up the government. And it has destroyed the credibility of the Warren Commission myth," Stone contended.

Though Stone said he finds it "unbelievable" that the N.Y. Times has so frequently attacked the film, he added that he does not take the situation personally. He said the Times also has attacked assassination investigator Jim Garrison, Oswald and President Kennedy himself and that the paper was in the forefront of what Stone called the establishment media's "lone-nut industry."

Stone characterized the "JFK" study guide as "a mild document that does not take the ruthless tone of the movie" but "raises questions so that kids can make up their own minds." He hopes the guide will serve as "an alternate form of 1960s history."

Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences executive director Bruce Davis yesterday declined comment on Belin's N.Y. Times article.

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