

Valenti sears 'JFK' once more

By David Kelly

WASHINGTON — MPAA president Jack Valenti, testifying before a House panel in favor of opening the Kennedy assassination files, continued his assault on the film "JFK" on Wednesday, this time joined by Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, who once chaired the House Assassinations subcommittee.

Speaking of "JFK" and other

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'JFK'

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conspiracy theories related to the Kennedy assassination, Valenti said, "this remorseless avalanche of fiction, quarter-truths, wild surmise and dissonant looney tunes is akin to being nibbled to death by ducks."

Valenti said he was keenly aware that he was attacking a movie made by Warner Bros., an MPAA member company.

"Coming forward on this was more important to me than my job — I can always get another job — I did because my conscience told me to," said the former aid to President Lyndon B. Johnson. "The only way to get rid of these kinds of theories and weasely people is to release all the documents."

Stokes, who has introduced the joint resolution to release all the files, has until Wednesday been relatively quiet about his opinions on Oliver Stone's "JFK."

"I saw the movie — although I had not originally planned to," Stokes told the House Judiciary committee. "When I saw it I found it very depressing to see someone take some facts — distort them — then add fiction to feed their theory."

Stokes said his office was flooded with calls and letters after people saw the movie account of how his subcommittee allegedly operated during the assassination investigation

"I realized that many people are going to think that this is the way it happened," Stokes said. "The movie says our government killed our president and then a congressional committee covered it up. That made me realize I had to do

something."

The new attacks on Stone's "JFK" came in the same week that the doctors who did the autopsy on the slain president slammed the film as fantasy.

Rep. Don Edwards, D-Calif., asked Valenti if he had heard of plans by Warner Bros. to try and market "JFK" to the nation's schools.

Valenti said he only knew what he had read about in the trade press.

"Well if it's true," Edwards said, "it's pretty rotten conduct."

A spokesman for Warner Bros. denied the charge but said that tapes of the movie "JFK" would be given out to Congress today.

"We hope it will help in the efforts to release the files," the spokesman said.

Valenti never mentioned Stone by name in his ridicule of movies

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and books touting conspiracy theories about JFK's death, but the implication was obvious when he excoriated "filmmakers who make propaganda plausible and turn fiction into fact." Then, quoting Tallyrand, he criticized filmmakers who "have all the virtues and but a single defect: They are wrong."

"The 'JFK Murder Truth Business' is becoming a major profit-making enterprise in America, and none have tilled that toxic soil with more efficiency than the bearers of the conspiracy flag," Valenti said. "The Lord only knows how many more conspiratorial badgers are out there burrowing into the trails of Alice's Nonsense Wonder-

land, ready to barter their gauzy and grotesque notions for gold in the publishing and movie marketplace."

Because of this conspiracy phenomenon, Valenti said, all files should be released to put an end to the speculation.

Brooks also supported the opening of the files but he said he thought it was "disgraceful" to show autopsy photos of Kennedy with the back of his head blown off.

"I don't care who wants to see them," Brooks said. "It's unnecessary, unbecoming and bad form. Let those who want to play detective look at the skull recreations." □

Valenti: U.S. studios safe

By David Kelly

WASHINGTON — The political fallout from the film "JFK" led one lawmaker Wednesday to ask MPAA president Jack Valenti if there should be limitations on foreign ownership of Hollywood studios.

"If the movie industry is this powerful, shouldn't we be fearful of that industry being owned by foreign governments?" Rep. Craig James, R-Fla., asked Valenti, who was testifying before the House Judiciary committee on opening the Kennedy assassination files.

Valenti told the lawmaker that he spends much of his time traveling abroad in efforts to persuade other countries to open up their markets to American films and TV

programs.

"I can't take one position here and another position when I travel abroad," Valenti said. "The people who make American movies are mostly Americans. They all have one singular trait, and that is they resent being told by anyone how to make a movie."

James persisted. "Do we need to fear the impact of foreign ownership?" he asked. "Do we need to be scared? Should we look into it?"

Valenti said that as long as there is no monopoly in Hollywood "there is no need to fear."

Currently, Rep. Leon Panetta, D-Calif., has a bill that would limit foreign ownership of U.S. film studios to less than 50%. The bill is still pending. □