

# The media's criticism of controversial

BY PHILIP WUNTCH

Dallas Morning News

Read *Time* and *Newsweek* and listen to Dan Rather. The emphasis is on how fallacious are the theories espoused by Oliver Stone's *JFK*, the film that opened Friday.

Read the movie critics, and some will tell you what a good film it is.

But Stone isn't surprised by the skepticism of the hard-news contingent.

"I'm a filmmaker working on the media's turf," he says. "They've been asleep for 20 years, and they know it. I'm not saying all the media — but certainly the high priesthood of the media is going to attack us.

"Dan Rather already has attacked us twice . . . Why is he so scared? What could the movie do that is so harmful to the issue? I think it's the old-school tie. He's so protective of the Warren Commission."

As a filmmaker, Stone is aware that many young people are ignorant of the facts behind the assassination in Dallas of President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963. He blames the history textbooks that tend to gloss over the ignoble event.

"They dismiss it in two paragraphs and make it seem like a John Wayne Western, complete with an A-OK ending," he says. "The way they tell it, John F. Kennedy

was a young and handsome president who was shot by a bad guy. Then the bad guy was shot by an angry vigilante. Then LBJ became president and carried on JFK's policies. End of story.

"The young people don't get the chance to see that JFK was an early Gorbachev — negotiating to end the Cold War and withdrawing troops from Vietnam. He did some things that were hawkish, but he refused to invade Cuba or Laos."

The film is dedicated to both Kennedy and to the young of the country.

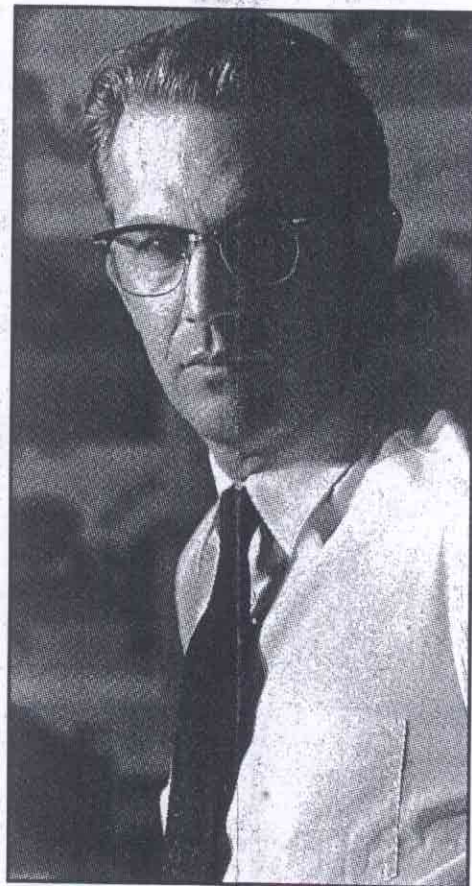
"Our only hope is the young," Stone says. "The apathy in this country is astonishing. People need to yell and scream to get open the (assassination) files that the government has embargoed until 2029. They need to get the CIA to open up their files on Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby.

"But the people have to have the will to get it done, and I'm not sure the older people have that will left."

*JFK's* presentation of gay conspirators, portrayed in the film by Tommy Lee Jones, Joe Pesci and Kevin Bacon, has angered members of GLAAD, the Gay &

(Please see *JFK*, Page D-4)

■ A new video/C-4



Kevin Costner plays attorney Jim Garrison in Oliver Stone's *JFK*.

# 'JFK' leaves Stone unturned

## Costner on 'JFK'

In Oliver Stone's *JFK*, Kevin Costner plays crusading attorney Jim Garrison, who challenged the Warren Commission's report on the John F. Kennedy assassination by bringing New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw to trial on a conspiracy charge.

But unlike Stone, Costner — a friend of President George Bush — is reluctant to discuss politics.

"My politics vary on different issues," Costner says.

"When I was in college, my brother was in Vietnam. The most daring thing I did in college was listen to Mort Sahl. Since then, I like to think I've expanded.

"Anytime anyone writes something, it should cause you to think. I'd like to think that all my whole life, I'd take in new ideas."

Yet Costner says that had he been on the jury of the Shaw trial, he probably would have voted not guilty.

"I just don't think Jim Garrison had a strong enough case," he says.

In any event, Stone was eager to get Costner for the movie. He sent him the first draft of the screenplay while the actor was in the middle of the trouble-plagued filming of *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*.

"I was tired and not particularly

happy while making *Robin Hood*," Costner says.

"I had just finished filming *Dances With Wolves*, and I had promised (my wife) Cindy that we would take time off after *Robin Hood*."

He passed on the first draft of *JFK*, finding it "information-dense, thick and a little confusing."

"But Oliver, being Oliver, crossed the ocean to talk to me," Costner says. "He brought a second script with him, and it was much better."

Costner is keenly aware that some people believe that the upright hero of *JFK* bears little resemblance to the real Jim Garrison.

"I knew early on that the film was never intended as a biography of Jim Garrison," he says. "There are a lot more sides of him than you see in the movie, and some of them are not flattering."

"But I think Oliver hints in the screenplay at infidelity and ambitiousness. But Garrison still comes off heroic, and I play him as written."

"I don't even look like Jim Garrison. Oliver felt only Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby should look like they really looked."

— PHILIP WUNTCH

# JFK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE D-1

Lesbian Alliance Against  
Defamation.

"I have explained to members of GLAAD that the film deals with historical data," Stone says. "My defense is that the homosexuality is historically accurate.

Homosexuality was the linking factor among the characters played by those three actors as well as Lee Harvey Oswald (played by Gary Oldman). It is absolutely necessary to show to the audience that Shaw (the film's chief villain, played by Jones) is a liar, leading a secret life, that he had an alias."

Ironically, Stone's next film, *The Mayor of Castro Street* (which he will produce but may not direct), will deal with another slain politician: gay San Francisco city supervisor Harvey Milk, who worked diligently for civic reforms.

"I will withdraw from that film if the gays really think I have misrepresented them," Stone says.

Despite the critical acclaim that has greeted such Stone films as *Salvador*, *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*, the filmmaker doesn't see himself as a critic's favorite.

"The heartland press always has treated me better than the so-called national press," he says.