

'Nixon' flick not set in (Oliver) Stone

Oliver Stone's list of enemies includes the person who is anonymously dispersing early script draft copies of "Nixon" to a swarm of magazines, trying to sabotage the director.

While some wonder whether the director engineered the leaks to goose some early publicity, insiders say he was completely blindsided to have to defend a work-in-progress months before it begins shooting. Stone issued a statement criticizing the media reports, saying they "totally misrepresent the film we're trying to make. Today's story, that we have Nixon organizing a hit squad that killed JFK, is ridiculous." This column first reported in Sunday's News the contents of "Nixon," including the allegations that Nixon's knowledge of an abortive coup attempt in Cuba could have led to JFK's assassination.

But in the draft I read, Nixon was an unwitting participant at best, who had no advance knowledge of the assassination. It's also a small part of a complex story. The fascinating thing is a mole known as Deep Throat was in large part responsible for bringing down the Nixon administration. Another Deep Throat, with murkier motives, is doing the same to the Nixon movie. Though Deep Throat emerged unscathed, this trickster might not, because the community's small. Word is mags like Entertainment Weekly are prepping upcoming pieces.

Milk's on front burner

The long awaited biopic of slain San Francisco supervisor Harvey Milk is heating up again, big-time. Sources say that Tony Kushner, who



Geena Davis



Dustin Hoffman

won the Pulitzer Prize and two Tony Awards for "Angels in America," is this close to agreeing to write the shooting script for Warner Bros.' "The Mayor of Castro St." And Dustin Hoffman has been telling people he wants to play the first openly gay S.F. pol when the film goes into production later this year. An A-list director is currently being courted. Robin Williams once was expected to star, but Hoffman's WB pic "Outbreak" has proved infectious, and sources there say they're hot for his next project. Milk was assassinated along with S.F. mayor George Moscone by city supervisor Dan White in the late 1970s.

VF photos get

Lansing worked up

Vanity Fair's Hollywood issue set

numerous precedents. Here's another: Even though one VF story described Paramount Pictures chairman Sherry Lansing as "bouncy and ever cheerful," it ran a photo that left her feeling humiliated and spitting bullets. In the section "The Power & Glamour," stars and power-brokers appear in various photos. While MCA honcho Lew Wasserman is pictured power-lunching with Sid

Sheinberg on the Universal lot Jan. 18 at 2 p.m., Lansing is shown poolside in a '40s-style bathing suit and come-hither look, with the caption, "The Working Girl." A former model, Lansing looks great, though many are wondering why the highest-ranking female Hollywood exec would pose in a cheesecake shot under a caption that gives off call-girl connotations. Truth is, Lansing struck the pose for Annie Leibovitz seven years ago. The photo was never used, and nobody bothered to call Lansing to see whether it could be

okay to dust it off and run it. She found out when she opened the magazine.

Sources said that VF editor **Graydon Carter** apologized, but that Paramount was exploring the legalities of the magazine using the old photo. A VF spokeswoman said Leibovitz owns the picture and the magazine meant no harm.

Fear factor

When it comes to businesses that run on fear, there's no business like show business. So New Line and HBO have found fertile ground for a new series they're hatching called "Fear Itself," a half-hour anthology which will call on top-caliber talent. The series was created by New Line production president **Michael De Luca**, who'll be executive producer with director **Renny Harlin** and screenwriter **Shane Black**. The three are already in business at New Line, with Harlin to direct his wife, **Geena Davis**, as an amnesiac assassin in the Black-scripted "The Long Kiss Goodnight." De Luca, Harlin and Black have already turned in a 10-page series bible and they'll begin with a 90-minute pilot of three episodes: De Luca said they'll use classic stories about phobias and come up with some of their own — though probably not De Luca's personal phobia. New Line's TV head **Robert Friedman** felt "Fear" will break new ground and that it would soon grow to weekly series status. Then, the big fear will be running out of phobias.

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