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Costner, Critics Back Film Writer

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Actor Kevin Costner and the National Society of Film Critics have thrown their support behind a writer for Washingtonian magazine who resigned after her favorable review of the film "JFK" was spiked by the editor.

The critic, Pat Dowell, said Costner telephoned her earlier this month and "said he thought I had done the right thing." Costner stars as New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison in the controversial film by director Oliver Stone.

Dowell, whose capsule review was to appear in the magazine's February issue, called the film a "brilliantly crafted indictment of history" and gave it 3½ out of a possible 4 stars.

Editor Jack A. Limpert removed the "JFK" portion of Dowell's column, writing to her: "I thought the major premise of the movie was preposterous, and rather than try to edit the review of the movie, I thought it was fairer to you just to take it out."

The National Society of Film Critics, a 32-mem-

ber organization of leading critics from around the country chaired by The Times' Peter Rainer, has issued a statement "deploring" the move.

"Limpert's decision, based on his admitted disagreement with the review's content, promotes censorship over freedom of speech and strikes a blow to the critical discourse so vital to a free expression of ideas," the organization stated.

Dowell, who reviewed films at the magazine for 10 years, said she doesn't subscribe to "every detail" in Stone's movie but that it "presents an interesting case of what might have happened."

As for Limpert, she said: "I just thought he's been in Washington a long time and he didn't like the movie himself and he felt it insulted Washington or those he deems to be part of Washington."

"He thinks the heart of Washington is that elite level of policy makers and bureaucrats—the CIA, FBI and executive branch—who are accused in the film of possibly participating in a conspiracy or cover-up. I think Washingtonians are more fairly characterized by people who showed up to celebrate the Redskins victory in the Super Bowl. I guess it's all who you hang out with."