

New Book, Movie Touch on King

Leader seen as human with shortcomings

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Martin Luther King Jr. was a great leader worthy of veneration and respect, but still a human being with human failings and shortcomings. In fact, two recent works touch on such issues.

Director Martin Scorsese's film "J. Edgar," released last year, was a scathing portrait of the late FBI Founder J. Edgar Hoover. It pictured Hoover as coveting personal power and acclaim, and obsessed by paranoia about the political left.

Hoover accumulated files on the private lives of people high and low, including Eleanor Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and King.

According to Scorsese, Hoover tried to blackmail King

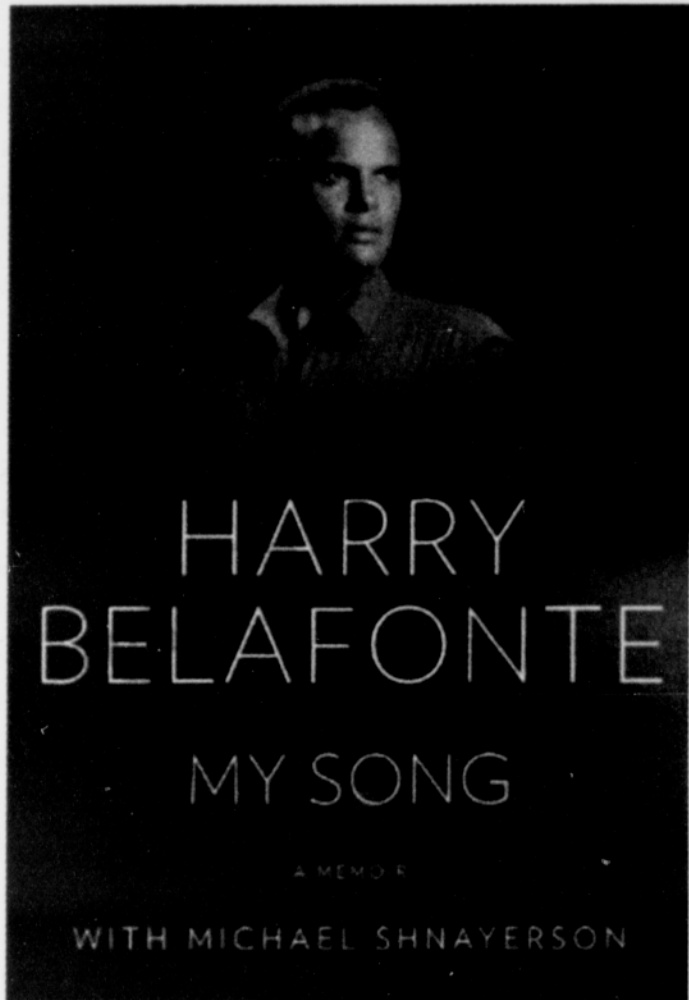
over an extramarital affair into turning down the Nobel Peace Prize.

King receives a much more sympathetic portrait in Harry Belafonte's autobiography, "My

tant supporters, venerated King not only as a leader, but as a personal mentor.

According to Belafonte, King recognized older civil rights organizations and his own Southern Christian Leadership Conference "were dominated by what he called the elders...the ministers who occupied positions of influence in all these groups. The ministers might talk the talk, but many balked at confrontation. They didn't want to upset the white powers in their communities. Nor did they want to alienate the bourgeois blacks who made up most of their congregations."

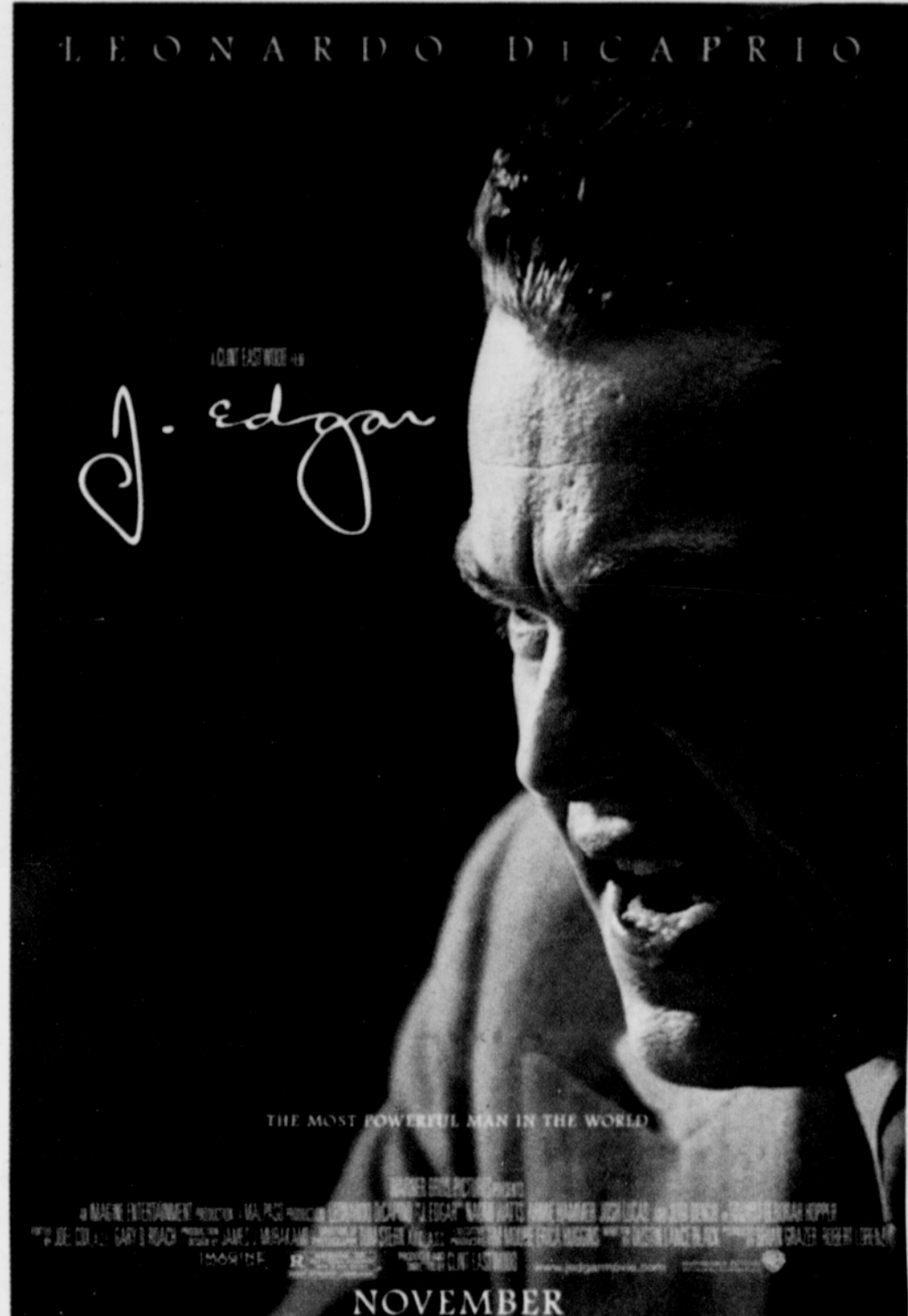
Belafonte writes that his West End apartment in New York became a "home away from home" for King where he could truly relax, indulging in wine and exhibiting a



Song," published last year.

Belafonte, one of the civil rights movement's most impor-

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