

Report to Readers:

A GIANT ADVERTISEMENT in the New York Times Dec. 6 for Mark Lane's book *Rush to Judgment* ("The #1 Best Seller that is changing history!") said: "THREE YEARS AGO . . . Mark Lane stood alone." Correction: Mark Lane would have stood alone if the NATIONAL GUARDIAN had not determined to stand with him.

Exactly three years ago this week a staff member of the GUARDIAN informed me that attorney Lane, troubled about the circumstances surrounding the arrest, conviction-without-trial and assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald in the murder of President Kennedy, had prepared and was seeking to publish an article expressing his doubts.

I called Lane and said that the GUARDIAN would like to see the manuscript with a view to printing it. He told me that two journals were considering it—after it had been turned down by several others—and

that he was awaiting their decision that day. Perhaps gratuitously, but on the basis of long experience, I told him that no one would touch it except the GUARDIAN if he called me the next day we could still make it for the issue coming up. He called me at home early the next morning and said: "It's yours."

When the article arrived later that morning it and passed it around the editorial staff, as the case with articles of controversy. Without a dissent, the opinion was to print it.

Thus, in the issue of Dec. 19, 1963, the GUARDIAN devoted five pages (the largest space ever given to one article) to Lane's commentary: "A Lawyer's Doubts on Lee Harvey Oswald." It did not seek to establish Oswald's innocence, or the existence of more than one assassin. It put the case that the evidence presented would have been insufficient to obtain a conviction if Oswald had been permitted to live.

ON THE BASIS of the interest and excitement created by this article—greater than any other in the GUARDIAN'S 18-year history—Mark Lane was launched on a crusade which culminated in the publication of *Rush to Judgment*. With a sense of journalistic pride and gratification—but with undiminished concern that the truth has not been told in the Kennedy assassination—the GUARDIAN notes that *Rush to Judgment* has for weeks maintained its No. 1 position among the non-fiction sales (225,000 copies). It notes also that the publisher, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, has advertised and publicized the book with vigor and persistence. This has not always been the case with publishers, who have taken controversial books and then buried them under their cold feet.

After the publication in the GUARDIAN of the Lane article (Continued on Page 2)

brief—it was reprinted ten times for a total of 50,000 copies—the GUARDIAN investigated every lead toward new evidence in the assassination. Much of the material we published—largely in the stories researched and written by Jack A. Smith—has reappeared consistently in the dozen and more books written about the assassination and the Warren Commission Report of Sept. 27, 1964.

In the Oct. 3, 1964, GUARDIAN, Mark Lane wrote a critique of the Report in which he concluded: "The Report . . . despite its possible present tranquilizing effect upon America—will rank in history with the finding that Dreyfus was guilty of treason and with the trial of the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union. When the government of the United States finds the courage and the conscience to emulate the government of France and reverses its false findings, respect for due process of law and justice in our land may return."

WITH NO FAITH in the courage and conscience

in the national leadership, the GUARDIAN persisted in its efforts to establish the facts in the assassinations—however much they were at variance with the findings of the Warren Commission—and aroused, among other things, the wrath of some estimable civil liberties attorneys and muck-raking journalists, whose faith in the national leadership apparently was greater than ours; or put another way, who could not believe that the national leadership could be so devious as to sanction omissions, distortions and perversions in the Warren Report.

In the last year and more, the independent investigation of the facts of Dallas has been taken over by the book writers—among them Harold Weisberg (*Whitewash*) and the newly published *Whitewash II*), Leo Sauvage (*The Oswald Affair*), Edward Jay Epstein (*Inquest*), Penn Jones Jr., the undaunted editor of the *Midlothian*, Tex., *Mirror* (*Forgive My Grief*), Richard H. Popkin (*The Second Oswald*) and Sylvan Fox (*The Unanswered Questions About President Kennedy's Assassination*).

In each of these books, there are elements to raise further doubt. But only rarely now is the cry of "fanatic" or "crackpot" raised. The hosannas that greeted the Report editorially have died away. The New York Times, which found no fault with it in September of 1964, said on Nov. 25, 1966: "Further dignified silence or merely more details by the commission or its staff, are no longer enough. Enough responsible inquiry has been aroused to deserve responsible answers."

THERE WILL BE no responsible answers from the commission. Instead the nation is being treated to a new bizarre episode in a fantastic manipulation of facts and human figures since Dallas: the hospitalization of Jack Ruby, scheduled for a new trial in February, and the finding (perhaps the quickest medical determination in history) that the assassin of Lee Oswald is suffering from cancer and may be too ill to stand for a new trial two months hence.

Now comes the question: Will he live? And the

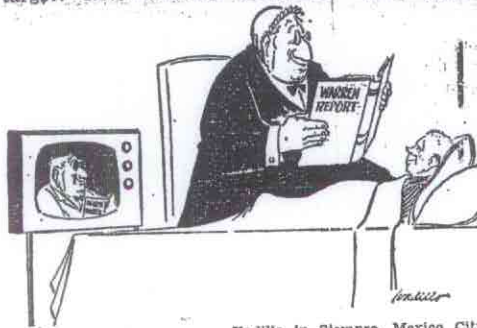
further question: If he is dying, will any effort be made to elicit from him, before he is silenced forever as Oswald was silenced, the information he sought in vain to impart to the commission? One of the most disgraceful and appalling episodes in the history of the commission was the rejection by Earl Warren of Ruby's frantic appeal that the chief justice hear his story outside the presence of Dallas County law enforcement officers. Ruby has from the day of his arrest never been out of this "protection," although the commission was empowered to use any means it needed to ascertain the facts.

If Ruby dies—and editor Jones for one predicted for him a premature death—it will be a tremendous gain for those who have sought to suppress the truth in the assassinations. This raises again the matter of the deaths of a score of persons—journalists, dancing girls, police officers and potential witnesses—in the intervening years. Some have died of "natural causes" and others admittedly by murder most foul. Among the dead is Dorothy Kilgallen, who was perhaps

the most diligent reporter in the U.S. on the trail of Ruby.

As expected, J. Edgar Hoover, with his hunting gun trained on Mark Lane specifically, issued a statement to the effect that no evidence has been presented to prove that Oswald had an accomplice. That, of course, accepts Oswald unquestionably as the assassin and dodges the issue raised by Lane. The question is not whether Oswald had an accomplice but whether any evidence has been adduced to prove that Oswald WAS the assassin, alone or with others.

Lane has also been the target of a prime Dallas target: Gov. Connally of Texas. Connally has



Vadillo in Siempre, Mexico City
Bedtime story

sought to vilify Lane as a self-seeking mountebank although the governor, by talking issue with the commission on the one-bullet story, is living proof of the validity of the demolition by Lane and others of the one-bullet story.

IT REMAINED FOR a liberal critic of the commission, in traditional fashion, to commend Lane for his book, but to seek to separate him from the original article that was the inspiration for the book. In a review of several books on the assassination, editor Ronnie Dugger of the bi-weekly Texas Observer, published in Austin, wrote Nov. 11:

"Lane's role in the post-assassination events

was, in my judgment, dubious. I remember pressing him one time for his source for a startling declaration of 'fact' he had made in a piece in the far-left rag, NATIONAL GUARDIAN . . . His articles on the assassination were full of holes, like most of the skeptics' articles have been. But his book is another matter."

Dugger, in the same review, expressed his admiration for his fellow editor Penn Jones, who is impelled, according to Dugger, by his suspicion that "President Kennedy's death was a plot that involved important people." Dugger wrote:

"Believing what he does, living a short drive from Dallas, he goes right ahead. Once I told him he was a brave man. He said hell, man, what was I talking about—he was scared. I told him I hadn't said he was scared, but that he was brave. He is."

Believing as we do at this "far-left rag" that you do sometimes have to be scared-brave to go after the facts in this time of Texas supremacy, we wonder about one thing:

If Ronnie Dugger had been offered the Mark Lane brief in December, 1963, would he have been scared-brave and run it, or just plain scared and rejected it?

COURAGE AND CONSCIENCE remain unknown commodities in the top echelons of government today. If the "national interest" requires that the lid remain on the events surrounding the assassinations of President Kennedy and Lee Oswald, then we are in desperate trouble in this nation. If, as Lane put it in the GUARDIAN Dec. 19, 1963, "Oswald is innocent—and that is a possibility that cannot be denied—then the assassin of President Kennedy remains at large."

Should Lane be right, then the crime of the century would have been committed not in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, but the day the Warren Commission issued its Report. Those Americans of courage and conscience who persist in their inquiry—in the true national interest—are aware of this. For their zeal the nation will one day be grateful.

—James Aronson