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Is JFK's Murderer At Large?

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RUSH TO JUDGMENT, Mark Lane, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $5.95.

THE OSWALD AFFAIR: An Examination of the Contradictions and Omissions of the Warren Report, Leo Sauvage, World, $6.95.

Both these books attack the Warren Commission Report with a vengeance, and one of them attacks the other on several peripheral issues (Sauvage against Lane).

Both books make essentially the same basic argument: The Warren Commission assumed Oswald's guilt and sought evidence to prove it, while suppressing a mass of evidence that would have or might have disproved it had a legal trial taken place. Thus the Warren Commission Report and proceedings replaced the traditional American legal machinery, but produced a verdict (guilty as charged) that is as binding as if a trial had taken place. It would be hard to find an ordinary person who believes Oswald to be innocent, yet both Sauvage and Lane believe this, and have amassed an enormous amount of data to support their views. Mpreover, the question of who killed Officer Tippit likewise remains in doubt, after reading these books, and the role of Jack Ruby becomes more deeply mired in suspicion.

BOTH Sauvage and Lane charge that the commission suppressed an enormous amount of data that conflicted with their bias against Oswald, and printed reams of worthless testimony from crackspots and various questionable characters, for example one Revilo P. Oliver, who said JFK was murdered on orders from Moscow

Innocent?

This picture of Lee Harvey Oswald recalls those bitter days during the Kennedy murder and aftermath in Dallas. Two books now suggest Oswald was framed. Reviewed today.

because he was "about to turn American."

Neither Lane nor Sauvage pretend that Oswald was a sterling character; on the contrary, they cite the usual psychiatric sources that show him to have been a sad misfit. But it is one thing to charge a man with being a misfit; it is quite another to accuse him of one of the vilest crimes in history. Sauvage says flatly that Oswald could not have murdered JFK and possibly did not murder Officer Tippit; Lane presents similar evidence (sometimes identical) to argue essentially the same thing, without, however, claiming it specifically.

If Oswald was not the murderer who was? Sauvage says it was a Southern racist conspiracy, in which Oswald was made to appear guilty by means of a series of planted incidents. Naturally he does not know who was guilty. Lane does not know and thinks a commission should have been set up to seek the murderer.

199

WHAT ARE the credentials of the two authors? Lane is a laywer and Sauvage is a correspondent for one of France's most influential newspapers, Le Figaro. Both men obviously have dug deeply into the crime, the Dallas legal jungle, the Warren Commission Report and the activities leading to the report. These are not inexperienced, crackpot books. On the contrary, despite several discrepancies that have already been pointed out in the press and elsewhere, these are both powerful, indeed, staggering performances. They suggest a fabric of investigation that may ensue in the future, the consequences of which cannot be foreseen at the present.

To be sure, Chief Justice Warren himself has said that it will be 75 years before all the truth is known, and since many documents that alone can tell the truth will not be available until that time it is probably wishful thinking to suppose that dramatic new evidence will be forthcoming. Yet Sauvage insists that the eight theses on which the Commission Report rests have been undermined or cast into serious doubt—the support of Oswald's alleged guilt—and thus the entire tragedy remains unsolved. end