



Mark Lane: sleuth.

Academic interest in murder

THE GENERAL reaction to the two new books ("Rush to Judgment," by Mark Lane, and "Inquest," by Edward Jay Epstein) on Kennedy's assassination has been either to scan the horizon for a second assassin or to reject it all as muck-raking. The two books have been lumped together: in fact, they and their authors are totally different.

Epstein will be the one who appears in the history books. He was the first to demonstrate that the Warren Commission report was inadequate and hasty.

Mark Lane is an ex-prosecutor, sleuth and an aggressive television debater, who seems to have taken up the subject as a career. Epstein is a young academic, who made his enquiries as his master's thesis at Cornell University.

It turned out to be an odd sort of thesis—headline-hitting, magazine serialised and translated into Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Italian and other languages. Epstein looked slightly abashed when he arrived in London last week to appear as Publisher's Exhibit "A."

He embarked on the subject two years ago because he wanted to see how a Government department operated in crisis situations where it had no parallel past experience to guide it.

His challenging of the Warren Commission looks a rather David and Goliath affair. Epstein is 30, and was born on the East Side of

New York. He is dark, looks boyish and has a rather flat voice.

American universities are full of his type—serious-minded and diligent, but ambitious, too.

Epstein is continuing his academic career at Harvard, where he is studying for his Ph.D. The subject: urban politics.

The commercial success of "Inquest" was a disappointment to him—in a way. "It's selling, but so are flying saucer books," he says. "And I think the same sort of people are buying both." 2/17