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2 Authors Challenge Assassination Report

THE NEW BOOKS attacking the Warren Commission's report have raised questions, possibly now unanswerable, about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In "Rush to Judgment" (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 478 pages, \$5.95), Mark Lane, a New York attorney, presents what amounts to a case for the defense, challenging all the evidence brought forward by the blue-ribbon Presidential Commission.

Edward Jay Epstein, in "Inquest" (Viking, 224 pages, \$5), uses a more delicate touch, but he is no less disquieting.

MARK LANE is the lawyer Marguerite Oswald asked to represent her dead son before the Warren Commission which, however, refused to let him cross-examine witnesses or participate in its proceedings.

Lane, in a statement about his books, declared he has no theories as to who killed the President or why. His way of challenging the evidence, however, tends to lead away from Oswald. Indeed, it suggests a conspiracy of which Oswald, too, may have been the victim.

"Whether Oswald was murdered because he was part of a conspiracy and the conspirators wanted to silence him or because his ultimate vindication would have caused a search for the real criminals to take place, from the point of view of the assassins the decision to murder Oswald — though the risks involved were immense — might well have been soundly calculated," Lane writes.

HIS REVIEW of the case, covering as it does a whole book, cannot be quickly summarized. He notes that the

commission failed to settle the dispute over the "one bullet theory," that the President and Governor John Conally of Texas were wounded by a single bullet.

Likewise, he delves into the tangled affairs of Jack Ruby, who evidently was the intimate of half the Dallas police force. He questions why, when a better plan was offered, the police officials went through with the elaborate plan to transfer Oswald to the county jail. He raises questions about Ruby's admission to the area where Oswald was to be taken out of the police headquarters.

He notes that two newsmen were slain after the assassination, one by a karate stroke; an automobile salesman was wounded in the head by an assailant after giving testimony about the murder of officer J. D. Tippit; that the alibi girl of the alleged attacker said she had worked for Ruby, then hanged herself in jail.

PIECE BY PIECE, Lane builds up doubts until he practically convinces the reader that a whole new investigation is needed — and quickly, before Jack Ruby dies or is put to death, the last living link at all in the whole mysterious business.

Epstein, whose well-publicized work was undertaken as a master's thesis at Harvard University, takes up in more detail the methodology of the Warren Commission.

Its members were all men of many affairs; they could not

pay close attention to the business of the commission, he says. The senior counsels were busy lawyers with heavy practices. Hence, the work devolved in able junior counsel, all hard pressed to complete their work and frequently swayed by the commission members' own ideas.

FOR INSTANCE, a counsel's insistence on cross-examining Marina Oswald ran into Chief Justice Earl Warren's sympathy for the young woman. The counsel found her testimony inconsistent and, at least, incomplete. But they were hard put to find a way to get at the truth.

Epstein also goes into the question of the one-bullet theory, the "shot from the knoll", and the unreliable witness issues covered by Mark Lane. He, indeed, gives a meticulous report of the use of the motion picture film which proved Oswald, in his sixth story window at the book depository, would have found it hard going to fire his Italian-made carbine three times in the space of a few seconds.

BOTH MEN seem agreed that the commission over-eagerly accepted evidence which led to the conclusion that Oswald, alone, was the assassin and was, in turn, slain by a Jack Ruby acting without any accomplice.

Epstein believes that, in part, the commission was under pressure of a sort because of the widespread belief in Europe and elsewhere that the President's death resulted from a coup d'etat.

The two authors have succeeded in raising questions which might cloud the report of the commission and which, certainly, will continue to haunt historians for generations to come.

THIS HAS been true in previous assassinations: there remain unanswered questions about the death of Abraham Lincoln, and the assassination of William McKinley was attended by ugly political rumors.

Certainly, when Jack Ruby ended Oswald's life, he extinguished whatever light that unattractive young man might have been able to shed on the assassination.

—BEN COLE