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The Controverted Photo Which Oswald Asserted Was
a Doctored Composite

Warren Group's Probe Under Critical Fire

INQUEST: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth. By Edward Jay Epstein; Viking; \$5.

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

Almost immediately after the assassination of President Kennedy and the subsequent murder of the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, a rash of irresponsible and sensational books and articles appeared, all directed to the point that Oswald might well have been part of a larger conspiracy and indeed might not have committed the deed at all.

A great many readers who were disgusted by these shoddy attempts to cash in on a national tragedy may be tempted to avoid these two new books dealing with the Warren Commission's investigation of the tragic events of November, 1963. This would be too bad, because both of these well-documented studies are deserving of serious

attention.

Epstein's book (originally begun as a master's thesis) is a penetrating study of the Commission itself and its approach to the investigation of the assassination.

THE MAIN question raised by Epstein is the question of the "dominant purpose" of the Commission, whether it was actually to establish the truth about the assassination or whether indeed it was rather to reassure the American public about what was assumed to be a fact, whether, in other words, it began with a basic assumption and collected evidence to support what he calls "its version of the truth."

Epstein further examines all of the aspects of the single bullet theory, stating clearly that either both President Kennedy and Governor Connally were hit by the same bullet or there had to be two assassins. The Commission itself was divided on this point, the members could not agree and so the matter was left open in the final report. Epstein also presents evidence and testimony presented to the Commission which would seem to indicate that, since both men were hit less than two seconds apart, it would have been physically impossible for the murder weapon to have been fired twice in this period of time.

MARK LANE, the author of "Rush to Judgment" is a New York attorney who, shortly after the assassination, formed the Citizens' Committee of Inquiry and be-

gan a searching investigation into the assassination and subsequent Oswald murder. His book is based upon taped testimony from the principal witnesses who appeared before the Commission in addition to the full Commission report and the report submitted by the FBI.

"Rush to Judgment" also questions the lone assassin theory and indicates that a great deal of supportive evidence was ignored by the Commission or given little consideration as if "rushed" to submit a verdict which would be acceptable to all Americans.

A great deal of weight is given to the testimony of witnesses who indicated that shots were fired and smoke was seen from a grassy knoll beyond the Texas Book Depository, testimony which the Commission, Lane says, saw fit to ignore. He too cites the FBI testimony which would seem to show that multiple shots could not have been fired from the single antiquated Italian carbine carried by Oswald in the limited space of time.

THE LANE book also devotes a great deal of space to a detailed consideration of the testimony relative to the murder of Oswald by Jack Ruby and to the shooting of Dallas police officer, J. D. Tippit.

The Epstein book includes a few illustrations; Lane's book has none at all. This is a disappointment, since a number of the controverted pho-

tos reproduced in the Commission's report are discussed at length. Many readers would appreciate an opportunity to judge these exhibits for themselves.

Both Lane and Epstein write well and present a persuasive case. The truly frightening aspect of both of these books is their view of a high-level governmental commission, its sessions often poorly attended by the members, sifting and choosing that evidence which would seem to support only an acceptable version of the events surrounding the assassination.

Whether or not you accept the author's views, both of these books are worthy of careful reading as responsible studies of one of the most controversial events of recent American history. — G. Robert Holsinger