

Witnesses Tired

By **BILL HUNTER**

Was Lee Harvey Oswald innocent, a member of an assassination team, a scapegoat or the lone killer of President John F. Kennedy?

Was the President shot from the Texas School Book Depository or from some other location?

Three years and hundreds of annoying telephone calls after the slaying of the President here, Dallas witnesses to the tragedy are tired of hearing these questions.

Emphatically tired.

THEY ARE tired of controversies that continue to crop up in books and magazines.

They are tired of hearing the name "Mark Lane," whose book, "Rush to Judgment," is a critique of the Warren Commission's inquiry into the murders of Kennedy, Police Officer J. D. Tippett and Lee Harvey Oswald.

Among those voicing weariness Saturday were Abraham Zapruder, who came up with the century's most famous amateur movies when he filmed the assassination; Charles Brehm, one of the closest eye witnesses to the motorcade; Miss Ann Donaldson, society editor of The Dallas News and also a witness; Warren Reynolds, who heard the shot that killed Tippett, and Mrs. Donald G. Moorman, amateur photographer who captured some of the fatal shooting with her Polaroid.

THESE ARE but a handful of the 226 witnesses that are named in Lane's heavily footnoted attack of the Warren Commission's conclusions.

However, several of the persons quoted by Lane to support his premise—that the panel was "blinded by the fear of what they might see" in a more thorough investigation—think Lane may have rushed to publication to make "a dirty dollar" faster than he accuses the Warren panel of having rushed to judgment.

Zapruder could have been speaking for any number of witnesses when he said, "I would just like to be left alone for a while."

"My own reason for talking about it again and again is to get rid of some of the seeds of doubt raised by these witch-hunters," said Brehm.

BREHM, WHO is quoted briefly on Page 56 of "Rush to Judgment," is not particularly fond of the way the author-lawyer treated his remarks. He called the book an attempt to make "dirty dollars."

Lane quotes Brehm as follows:

"I very definitely saw the effect of the second bullet that struck the president. That which appeared to be a portion of the president's skull went flying slightly to the rear of the president's car and directly to its left. It did fly over toward the curb to the left and to the rear."

"I don't think Lane's book is a bunch of misinformation, but I do think it is full of innuendos," Brehm told The Dallas News. "He is adding his own interpretation to what I said. I said I saw SOMETHING fly which he (Lane) identified as skull. I didn't know what it was. I still don't. I've been told that's what it was."

A SELF-DESCRIBED "expert on those few seconds in history," Brehm said he was first approached by Lane through a woman in Oklahoma City, Okla.

"She called me and said she had a doubt in her mind. She was willing to believe almost anything I said. Later she called to ask a favor: Would I be in a film interview for a documentary?"

"Instead Lane showed up at my house and interviewed me at length, then filmed an interview. Then, he took one little point, the ballistics issue, and blew the whole thing out of proportion."

Brehm added that he is "positive" there was "only one weapon involved," that there were "only three shots fired," and that they came from the Texas School Book Depository or "a building just across the street, on the same side of Elm, further up toward downtown."

HE EXPLAINED that he did not see the window or the rifle but he feels certain of the direction because "I was in a Ranger battalion during World War II and you didn't get a chance to second guess—you know where the bullets were coming from."

After much questioning from persons "all over the country," Brehm still feels strongly about the number and result of the shots.

"The first shot hit the President," he

of Controversy

maintained. "He raised both hands to the side of his head. That shot was Number 1. Shot 2 hit him directly in the head. There is no doubt in my mind, but I don't want to go into the gory details. The third shot hit no one. It made a sound of 'passing by.' It cracked. It sounded like the bullet went all the way to Oak Cliff."

Having "never heard of Mark Lane," Mrs. Donald G. Moorman nevertheless is labeled by him as "a most important witness" with "an essential part of the evidence."

Lane wrote in his book: "As she took a picture of the approaching motorcade, the Book Depository formed the backdrop. Her camera was aimed, providentially, a trifle higher than the occasion demanded, and her photograph therefore contained a view of the 6th-floor window of the building, including the alleged assassination window."

"Wrong," said Mrs. Moorman in a 1-word summary of Lane's description of her photograph.

"I DID GET pictures of the building, but they did not show the 6th-floor window," she said.

When asked if she knew of any reason why the investigating panel did not publish her picture, she replied, "I don't even know if they had access to it, but the FBI did."

Was she ever called upon to testify before the commission? (Lane's book says she was not questioned by it or by any of its attorneys.)

"I was called before the commission, but I had a sprained ankle and couldn't go. I was never recalled," she said.

She took a slap at those persons who stir up controversies, saying, "I think they are publicity seekers. As for myself, I'd rather get through with the whole thing."

OTHER WITNESSES have opinions about the happenings on that day in Dallas, but most "want to be left out of this controversy."

Said Zapruder, "I have my own opinion, but that's not important. I'm not important. I was just there accidentally. I'll talk about it maybe later—much later."

Said Miss Donaldson, "I've been called by any number of people asking what I

saw. Most of them, though, were looking for Mary Elizabeth (Woodward, formerly with The Dallas News). But I'm tired of talking about it."

Miss Woodward, now living in Mexia, could not be reached for comment, but she wrote a story, quoted in Lane's book, which said, "Suddenly there was a horrible, ear-shattering noise coming from behind us and a little to the right."

(To Miss Woodward's right was the grassy hill, thought by some persons to have been the position of a second assassin.)

BUT MISS DONALDSON, friend and former roommate, added that "Mary Elizabeth has a slight hearing difficulty in one ear.

"Lane tried to subpoena Mary Elizabeth to testify in behalf of Oswald. He was trying to prove Oswald didn't do it," said Miss Donaldson.

Another witness, again brought into the limelight by Lane, is Warren Reynolds. Of him, Lane writes: "In January, 1964, Reynolds told the FBI that he could not identify the man he saw on Nov. 22 as Lee Harvey Oswald. In July, 1964, he told commission counsel that he believed that the man was Oswald."

Lane hints that Reynolds changed statements after and because of an attempt on his life.

Reluctant to relate his story again, Reynolds told The Dallas News, "Getting shot didn't change my opinion either way. I did identify twice, to the FBI and the commission, Lee Harvey Oswald."

WHEN ASKED if he thought the attempt on his life was related to his role as an ear witness to the shooting of Tippit, he replied, "Why would they shoot me? I don't know anything."

Like Gov. Connally, most of the witnesses who talked to The Dallas News believe the Warren investigation, even if it erred in part, arrived at the right conclusion.

Summing up a case in defense of the panel, Brehm said, "Nobody will defend the Warren report because you can't make a dollar that way. If anything constructive develops, reopen the case. If not, let sleeping dogs lie."