

Telephone Call from Leo Sauvage Thursday night 29 July 1965

Mr. Sauvage says that he intended to send for a copy of the French publication which we have been told was the source of Mark Lane's remark on a TV discussion last year in which he attributed a statement to Sauvage to which Sauvage objected strongly. He was not previously aware of the article in that publication; it is not one that he wrote and he will be surprised if he is quoted in the article. In any case, the statement that the bullet missed Walker by 10 metres (30 feet) is so absurd on its face that he questions the motives of anyone who quoted it and resents the fact that it was wrongly attributed to him.

He still has had no offer of publication of an English edition of his book; he believes that there has not been a single review in any American paper or magazine, though he has been told that there was a favorable review in the international (European) edition of the NY Times. He believes that publishers feel that an English edition of his book would not be a good commercial prospect and that there is no other reason, certainly no sinister reason. If Mark Lane's contract with Grove Press was cancelled, it might well be because Lane had failed to complete his book in the agreed time; otherwise, Lane would not have accepted the cancellation without a fight. He still seems to feel that Lane is an unprincipled and contemptible person and does not acknowledge that he made any contribution to the case against the Warren Report.

Sauvage told me that he had received the photographs of the grassy knoll from a man in California, with a covering letter which claimed that the men could be seen to be holding or shooting a rifle. Sauvage has examined the photos repeatedly, and with magnifying glass; there may be a man or men there, but he sees no weapon and regards the claims about the photos as symptomatic of "desperate and dishonest" people. In his opinion, the case against the Report is a strong one--that is, on the evidence of the testimony and exhibits, it is clear that the Commission failed to follow up important leads, concealed certain known facts, and did at best a poor and careless job. Those are the grounds for the attack on the Report, and in his view resort to fantastic claims (such as the photos) is self-defeating.

He was surprised (and a little amused in a somewhat patronizing tone) to learn that I was still preoccupied with the case; but frankly impressed to learn that I had been in touch with some of the former counsel (I did not specify which) and with one of the expert witnesses; his own experience had been that they refused to discuss or to answer questions, which he considered outrageous. (On that much, at least, we were in agreement.) He said that while he is not actively working on the case any more, he was still interested enough to welcome a phonecall if there were any significant developments, and invited me to feel free to telephone at any time.