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INEZ ROBB

W1 Books on JFK's Death Boom

The assassination of President Kennedy has been an unexpected windfall to only one sector of the international economy: the publishing business.



Both at home and abroad a steady stream of books, challenging the conclusions of the Warren Commission, tumble from the presses. So far all the critical volumes have vehemently disputed the findings of the commission that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone and was the sole assassin.

Now it is quite possible that at some time some investigator will be able to prove that the young President was the victim of a conspiracy, describe the conspiracy and name the conspirators. But no one has done so to date.

In the United States there has been a race on to get into print with a brace of books critical of the Warren report. Viking Press has hit the stands first with "Inquest" by Edward Jay Epstein. Now, Holt, Reinhart and Winston Inc., has upped the publication of "Rush To Judgment" by Mark Lane from its original publication date of Sept. 8 to Aug. 15.

No critical judgment of either book is implied here. But I do make a judgment of a letter addressed to me (and no doubt thousands of other newspaper writers) by Arthur A. Cohen, vice president and editor-in-chief of Holt, Rinehart.

The opening paragraph of Cohen's letter reads: "Some books are so horrible—horrible by virtue of the directness and savagery with which they assail commonly accepted opinion—that we feel obligated to ignore them.

"When the issue of such books is the procedure and methods by which a presidential commission of inquiry, presided over by the nation's highest judicial officer, inquires into the murder of its President, it is a matter, indeed, which, however horrible to consider, must be considered.

"Mark Lane's . . . 'Rush To Judgment,' a critique of the Warren Commission's inquiry . . . is such a horrifying book .

I have not seen "Rush To Judgment." So I cannot tell if it is as horrible as the editor says.

But I have been exposed to Cohen's prose which is, in my judgment, inflammatory, irresponsible and in extremely bad taste.