

23 years later, Oswald goes on trial

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LEE Harvey Oswald has finally been brought to trial, almost 23 years after he was arrested for assassinating President John F. Kennedy.

The trial was secretly staged in London before TV cameras. The bizarre proceeding heard 25 witnesses, including some who saw the assassination, plus medical, forensic and ballistics experts, several of whom were never called by the Warren Commission.

Flamboyant attorney Gerry Spence of Wyoming was hired to defend Oswald. Aggressive former L.A. district attorney Vincent Bugliosi, who prosecuted cult killer Charles Manson, represented the People. Lucius Bunton, a Dallas federal judge, presided and the jury was picked from the current Dallas rolls.

All were flown to London by the cable channel Showtime and the British TV station London Weekend and sworn to secrecy. The trial was staged over a week in a studio

replica of a Dallas courtroom. Edited highlights of the proceedings will be broadcast over two nights in November to mark the anniversary of the assassination.

The verdict is a secret, known only to the executive producer, Richard Drewett, and it will not be revealed before the broadcast. The jury was also asked to say whether, if guilty, Oswald acted alone or in a conspiracy.

Lee Harvey Oswald, arrested in Dallas hours after Kennedy was slain on Nov. 22, 1963, was himself assassinated 48 hours later by Jack Ruby. The lack of a trial has left disturbing unanswered questions hanging over the Kennedy assassination for a generation.

Harry Chandler, director of program development at Showtime, told PAGE SIX: "We did everything we could to make this a real trial. And it was real. There were no actors. We got two of the best attorneys in the coun-

try and I can tell you, they went at it as if it were the actual trial. They almost stormed out of some hearings, upset at the decisions of the judge. They really fought.

"The witnesses had never faced cross-examination before. Some of them had a real tough time on the stand. It was fascinating.

"There were matters brought up which were not considered by the Warren Commission, matters relating to the body of the President and his wounds. The jury saw a version of the Zapruder film of the assassination, which was enhanced using special techniques, and there was information in the stills I was unaware of."

Said prosecutor Bugliosi: "In the future, this is the document that researchers into the assassination will want to get their hands on." Defense attorney Spence: "It doesn't matter who won the case. The American people are the winners here."