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Our Man Hoppe

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A Half-Vast Plot



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SCORES of writers, lawyers, private investigators, underground press editors and several podiatrists are already hard at work on manuscripts revealing the various conspiracies behind the attempt on President Ford's life last week.

The theory that Lynette Alice (Squeaky) Fromme, a dingbat follower of Charles Manson, was acting alone when she didn't fire the gun has, of course, been dismissed out of hand.

Typical of the sensational exposes now in the works is writer-attorney Park Lane's 842-page manuscript on the subject, which is already in the hands of his publishers. Its title is "Rush to Print!"

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IN IT, Lane becomes the first to advance the now-popular Four-Bullet Theory. With the aid of diagrams and charts, he proves conclusively that Miss Fromme failed to fire not one, but four bullets before she was arrested.

Moreover, he presents a widely suppressed sworn affidavit from Albert Klabhorne, a West Palm Beach ballistics expert, that a fifth "mystery bullet" not fired by Miss Fromme's Colt .45 was actually not fired by a .372 Borsalino whose owner has never been identified.

Lane couples this with eyewitness testimony that, while Miss Fromme was not firing at the President, somewhere between three and 27 persons on a grassy knoll to the southeast were also not firing at the President. "I distinctly heard at least 23 shots not being fired from that area," swears one witness.

As supporting evidence, Lane introduces a fuzzy photograph of a tramp arrested less than three blocks away from the scene who bears a startling resemblance to G. Gordon Liddy. "This proves," he writes, "that there was a coverup."

As to Miss Fromme's motives for not shooting the President, Lane believes she was either working for Fidel Castro and against Yasir Arafat or vice versa as a plant for (a) the CIA, (b) the FBI, (c) the Department of Agriculture, (d) all three or (e) none of the above.

Lane resolves this dilemma with "The Two Miss Frommes Theory." Less than 45 minutes after Miss Fromme I was arrested for not shooting the President a woman of her description, (Miss Fromme II) was arrested in Des Moines, Iowa, for not hitting a police officer over the head with a bottle.

"It would literally be impossible," Lane says triumphantly, offering airline timetables to prove his point, "for her to be in those two places in the same week!"

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WITH ALL the queasy public doubts and fears that will be sown by these books, let us hope the White House will quickly appoint a panel of distinguished Americans led by the chief justice of the Supreme Court to examine all the evidence thoroughly and issue an exhaustive report as to precisely who didn't shoot the President.

That should lay the matter to rest once and for all.