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BBC Telecast On JFK Death Ends in a Row

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LONDON, Jan. 30—A marathon BBC television broadcast intended to resolve the mysteries of President Kennedy's death ended this morning with a split verdict by a "jury" of two legal authorities and an ill-tempered wrangle on the part of everybody else.

The focus of the program was the world premiere of "Rush to Judgment," a film attacking the Warren Commission report that took two hours of a program lasting from 7:25 p.m. yesterday to just after midnight.

The film was based on the book by American attorney Mark Lane, who appeared on the program in an angry confrontation with two members of the Warren Commission staff.

In the end, a detached verdict was expected from Prof. Alexander Bickel of Yale Law School and Lord Devlin, an eminent British jurist. Both men emerged with their prior convictions unchanged.

Bickel said he still felt that confused evidence over the number of bullets involved in the assassination justified a reopening of the case by a small, full-time official body.

SEES PUBLIC SERVED

But Lord Devlin said the public interest had already been served by the commission findings. "The rest can wait for history," he said, and added: "Even a dead President is entitled to some bodily peace."

Both Bickel and Devlin agreed that Lane had developed no real evidence of a conspiracy between Dallas police, Jack Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald, the alleged assassin.

The program began with excerpts from Lane's film dealing with Oswald's marksmanship, or alleged lack of it, and with the question of how a single bullet passed through Kennedy's throat and into Texas Gov. Connally's back and wrist, emerging almost intact.

Lane's film consisted of repetitious interviews with witnesses who all maintained they thought that shots had come from a grassy knoll in front of the Presidential limousine, instead of from the Texas School Book Depository, from where Oswald supposedly fired his shots.

Two former staff members of the Warren Commission flew to London to appear on the program, and, predictably, they differed with Lane.

But Arlen Specter, now District Attorney of Philadelphia, made the interesting admission that the one-bullet conclusion was "not indispensable" to the Warren Commission case.

There could have been an earlier shot fired by Oswald, meaning that Connally could have been struck by a second shot, he said.

WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE

The other commission expert, David Belin, now an attorney in Des Moines, said Lane had wholly ignored the weight of evidence pointing to shots from the Book Depository while inflating "a puff of smoke" into a second assassin on the grassy knoll.

The second half of the program dealt variously with vanishing and cropped photographs, Jack Ruby's relations with the police, and the allegedly suspicious deaths of eight persons involved in the tragedy.

The program ended with Lane charging that BBC announcer Kenneth Harris was performing "a great disservice to truth" by trying to silence him, while Harris made small effort to conceal his relish in doing just that.

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