

BBC's Marathon 'Inquest' on Death of

By Karl E. Meyer

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A marathon BBC television broadcast intended to resolve the mysteries of President Kennedy's death ended early today 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's report, which took two hours of a program lasting from 7:25 p.m. Sunday to just after midnight.

The film was based on the best-selling book by attorney

Mark Lane, who appeared on the program in an angry confrontation with two members of the Warren Commission staff.

In the end, the members of the "jury," Prof. Alexander Bickel of Yale Law School and Lord Devlin, an eminent British jurist, emerged with their prior convictions unchanged.

Disagree on New Probe

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.

But Lord Devlin said the public interest had already been served by the Commission findings. "The rest can

wait for history," he said, adding quietly, "Even a dead President is entitled to some bodily peace."

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

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

Lane's film consisted of repetitious interviews with witnesses who maintained

they thought that shots had come from a grassy knoll in front of the presidential limousine.

Two Probers on Program

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, did make 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 Gov. Connally could have been struck by a second shot, he said.

The other Commission ex-

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Kennedy Ends in Split Verdict

pert, David Belin, now an attorney in Des Moines, said that Lane had wholly ignored the weight of evidence pointing to shots from the Texas Book Depository behind Mr. Kennedy 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.

No New Revelation

Nothing in the Lane film constituted a fresh revelation, and the discussion of his charges only confirmed the

tendency of the controversy to bring out the worst in everybody.

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

BBC had constructed a 300-foot model of the plaza in which the President was killed, and used blown-up photographs of the disputed single bullet as a somewhat morbid backdrop for the debate.

It was not, all together, a very brilliant evening for the American image. When the marathon inquest on the President's death was interrupted

for a news report, the news was of racial violence in Chicago and the dynamiting of Yugoslav missions from coast to coast.