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April 17, 1964

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

J. Lee Rankin, Esquire
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D. C. 20002

Dear Lee:

The enclosed clipping from the Rome Daily American indicates that Lane is continuing his antics - with less and less restraint.

The clipping was sent to me by Virginius Dabney, Editor of the Richmond Times Dispatch, who is now traveling in Italy. In his letter, Mr. Dabney stated that another story in the Rome press referred to Lane having come to Rome from a meeting of lawyers in Budapest. Mr. Dabney further wrote that:

"This is the sort of tripe the Europeans are getting right along. . . ."

I am aware, of course, that you and the Commission have been concerned about the distortions and irresponsibility of the European press. But when American citizens, and especially a member of the bar, make statements like those attributed to Lane, the behavior of the press is less surprising.

There ought to be some way for the bar to discipline people like Lane, as he is certainly bringing serious discredit to the legal processes of his country.

Sincerely,

Lewis

24/167

cc: Messrs. Craig, Rhyne,
Seymour and Wright

Lane Condemns Press 'Silence' In Oswald Case

By WAYNE WANGSTAD
(Staff Writer)

Mark Lane, one-man defense counsel for Lee Harvey Oswald, President Kennedy's alleged assassin, last night struck out at the seductive silence of the press in America over the facts surrounding the deaths of Kennedy and Oswald, the changing details of the evidence against the accused assassin, and revealed what he claimed was an interesting case

of news picture "doctoring."

Speaking in a Rome news conference, Lane said that the press in some cases has been "ordered" to layoff certain factors surrounding the Kennedy assassination — one of them the number of shots fired at the president — and in at least one case has voluntarily "killed" a story because it was considered too "hot" by a New York newspaper.

Lane was recently "dismissed" by

Oswald's mother as the attorney representing her son. However, Lane said that he had never actually been hired by Oswald's mother but had only agreed to present the results of his labors to the Warren Commission investigating the assassination.

In another instance, Lane said newsmen of the Dallas Morning News, published in the city where the president was killed, were di-

rectly ordered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation not to talk with him concerning the events surrounding that fatal Nov. 22.

The "doctored" photograph the New York lawyer cited showed Os-

wald posing in a backyard with a revolver strapped to his hip and holding a copy of a newspaper — the "Millitant" — in one hand and the alleged murder rifle in the other. Lane charged that pictures of the rifle in three different publications showed a different rifle. In one case the rifle had a telescopic sight, in another an entirely different bolt mechanism than the other two, he said.

"I showed the picture to a famous firearms expert," Lane said, "and he told me that there hadn't been a rifle like that manufactured in the United States or anywhere in the world in the 19th or 20th Centuries."

Lane pointed to the stock of the weapon, indicating that the rifle had no slopping gripping area for the hand — a design feature unheard of in modern firearms and a small detail that is present on the Italian weapon that authorities say killed Kennedy.

Pointing to photographs of Oswald, downtown Dallas and sketches of the parade route the presidential caravan followed that day, Lane said flatly that if Lee Harvey Oswald were tried in a court of law today "he would be found not guilty of Kennedy's death, the wounding of Gov. Connally and the murder of Dallas policeman Tippett."

Lane went into what he called the "great amount of inconsistencies" in the facts of the investigation by the Dallas police, FBI and Secret Service:

- The rifle. "The rifle changed nationality and caliber in the course of 24 hours. First it was a 7.65 millimeter German Mauser, then it became a 6.5 millimeter Italian rifle."

- Parafin tests to determine whether Oswald had fired a rifle. "Sworn affidavits by police experts concluded that Oswald had traces of nitrate on left and right hands and that he probably had recently fired a pistol; no support for his firing a rifle."

The Dallas police chief, Lane said, had said the parafin tests were positive, that "Oswald was the murderer." Lane pointed out that the tests are proof of firing a gun and not proof of murder.

- Darryl Click, the taxicab driver who drove Oswald to the movie house where he was arrested. "There has never been a man by the name of Click who drove a cab or ever lived in Dallas." Lane said they have since found another man, with another name, as the taxi driver.

- Witnesses to the murder of officer Tippett and President Kennedy. "Miss Markham, who witnessed the Tippett killing said she had over 20 people from the FBI, Secret Service and Dallas police force tell her not to talk about the case ... she said she saw the murder and the man run away ... that she spent 20 minutes with Tippett and there was no one else on the street and was therefore the only witness ... that the police description of the man was a white man five feet 10 to 11 inches with thin, blond hair ... that Miss Markham told police that the man was short, heavy and had dark, bushy hair."