

Critics of Warren Findings Assailed

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Was there more than one assassin of President Kennedy?

Conclusively no, say two attorneys for the Warren Commission which investigated the President's death in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

Possibly yes, say two New York authors whose recent books have criticized the commission's findings.

The lawyers charged in a heated panel discussion yesterday that "earshot testimony" was used by the writers in an attempt to discredit the commission.

INVITES SUIT

Attorneys Joseph A. Ball and Wesley J. Liebeler confronted authors Mark Lane, writer of "Rush to Judgment," and Edward J. Epstein, author of "Inquest," in the discussion before the Associated Press Managing Editors' convention.

Liebeler invited Lane to sue him for libel, and Lane indicated that he would.

Ball and Liebeler defended the Warren Commission report as thorough and accurate in the way it reached the decision that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting

alone, fatally shot Kennedy.

Lane labeled the commission report fraudulent and Epstein called for public release of autopsy photos and X-rays of the dead President's body. The U.S. Government and the Kennedy family have withheld them.

OTHER DIRECTION

Ball criticized what he called use of "earshot testimony" in Lane's contention there could have been a second assassin involved.

Lane said some witnesses told him they thought the shots did not come from the sixth floor window of the Texas Book Depository, as reported by the Warren Commission.

Ball, a Long Beach attorney, said the commission had shown that the sounds of the shots were different "depending on where you stood" because of acoustical factors.

Liebeler, a professor of law at the University of California at Los Angeles, called Lane's book "a tissue of distortion" and said Lane earlier had threatened to sue him for libel for such remarks.

BEEN WAITING

"I've been waiting anxiously for those papers ever since," Liebeler said. "If you have them here, I'll be glad to accept service of process because you know very well as soon as you do that, you're going to have to submit yourself to deposition under oath, and go through discovery proceedings, and that day I'll wait for, Mr. Lane."

Lane, sitting next to Liebeler, said, "You'll have them very soon."

Withholding of the autopsy photos and X-rays of Kennedy's body was a basis in the argument. Epstein said the autopsy report indicated one bullet went

through Kennedy's throat and struck Gov. John Connally of Texas. But he quoted two FBI agents as saying only one bullet hit Kennedy's back, and that it fell out of the wound.

CONCLUSION

"If these autopsy photos reveal that the bullet exited the throat, the possibility there was a second assassin will be virtually reduced to nil," Epstein said.

"If they reveal that the bullet in question did not pass through the body . . . that would substantially reduce the probability that Kennedy was killed by a single assassin."

President Johnson said in a news conference Nov. 4 that "I think that any American can understand the reasons why we wouldn't want to have the garments and the records and everything paraded out in every sewing circle in the country to be exploited and used without serving any good or official purpose."

CALLED ESSENTIAL

"These photos might resolve the mystery," Epstein said.

Epstein said the Warren Commission could not have finished its job without analyzing the pictures.

Liebeler said Epstein's book contained faulty research and scholarship.

Lane called for creation of a new commission to hold open hearings. He also criticized the press for not demanding open hearings by the Warren Commission and said the commission had ignored certain evidence in an attempt to prove that Oswald alone was responsible.

Lane was the attorney for Oswald's mother. Epstein is working on a doctor's degree at Harvard.