

The Screen: Mark Lane vs. the Warren Report

'Rush to Judgment' at Carnegie Hall Cinema

RUSH TO JUDGMENT; a film report based on the book by Mark Lane; directed by Emile de Antonio; produced by Mr. de Antonio and Mr. Lane and distributed by Impact Films; with Mr. Lane as interviewer. At the Carnegie Hall Cinema, Seventh Avenue and 56th Street. Running time: 116 minutes.

By BOSLEY CROWTHER

SINCE there is nothing in the film "Rush to Judgment" that hasn't already been revealed in the book of the same title, researched and written by Mark Lane, one might wonder what is the justification and what is the purpose served by this almost two-hour-long compilation of photographed interviews with close to a score of persons in connection with the assassination of President Kennedy.

The answer—or, at least, the speculation—is that this direct presentation of the testimony of eyewitnesses that might have been offered by Mr. Lane in defense of Lee Harvey Oswald, had he been permitted to do so, serves further to convince the viewer that there was evi-

dence the Warren Commission failed to assemble or neglected to evaluate in preparing its report. This dramatic materialization of witnesses before the eye and ear has much more immediacy and impact than the printed word in covering the thesis of Mr. Lane.

Not that the testimony, given by these witnesses to the questioning Mr. Lane, is likely to persuade the thoughtful viewer that Oswald did not assassinate the President or that someone else was involved. The testimony, however vivid and forcefully presented, is, at best, rather sketchy and speculative.

Several witnesses who say they were standing on the railway overpass to watch the Presidential motorcade testify that they distinctly heard shots and saw puffs of smoke appear from the area of a picket fence atop a grassy knoll opposite the building from which Oswald presumably fired. Several others who were in the area say they heard shots and saw evidence that would indicate the lethal bullets came from a direction other than that

in which Oswald presumably was.

Still others, dramatically examined before the cameras—often exactly where they stood on the fatal day—provide Mr. Lane and the viewer with personal observations that contradict or challenge the full validity of the conclusions in the Warren report. There is evidence to support the allegation that Jack Ruby was well acquainted with "more than half" the members of the Dallas police force, that he was a friend of J. D. Tippit, the policeman who was killed in a Dallas street shortly after the assassination and that many photographs and items of evidence were destroyed or mutilated by the government investigators.

Some witnesses appear substantial and creditable. Others much less so. Two or three of the interviews conducted by Mr. Lane look egregiously staged by him and Emile de Antonio, who co-produced and directed this film, which began its first public engagement in this country at the

Interviews Contradict Official Findings

Carnegie Hall Cinema yesterday.

But the total effect of the picture is that of a good courtroom film that bombards the viewer with a loaded array of testimony and evidence. While it does not have the compact structure or the accumulating display of mounting drama of the documentary film "Point of Order," about the Senate hearings conducted by Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, which Mr. de Antonio also helped to produce, it distinctly builds up an impression that the Warren Commission was lax in its investigations and that many critical questions remain to be explored officially.

If the purpose of this film is to rouse its viewers into having doubts about Oswald's total guilt—and to stimulate melodramatic speculations—then it eminently succeeds.