

Winter Soldier Investigation Mark Lane — Who are the war

PAUL EBERLE

(The following is the second part of a four-way interview with Mark Lane, Jane Fonda, Steve Jaffe & Monique Truong Miller.)

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criminals in Vietnam?

Paul [to Mark Lane :

What is the "Winter Soldier Investigation," and when will it take place?

Mark Lane: The "Winter Soldier Investigation" (it's from Tom Paine's reference to the summer soldiers and sunshine patriots, and the veterans take the position that the winter of their service begins now, when they come back to America and have to explain; they feel compelled to explain what it is that they have done in Vietnam) — Camus said that a man should be neither an executioner nor a victim; we have become both in Vietnam. And, perhaps, although there are more than a million Vietnamese who have been killed during the war, most of them civilians — perhaps, ultimately, we are the victims of this war.

If you meet the guys who come back, you'll know what I mean in terms of what has happened to them — what they have become. And the ones who are the healthiest are the ones who are openly and publicly speaking out now and saying, "We want America to know what has been done in the name of this country — what we have done in the name of national policy."

Paul: Was this organized by MDM [the Movement for a Democratic Military, an organization among servicemen]?

Mark: No; it was organized by Veterans of the War. The coordinating organization, I suppose, is the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Jane: It's being sponsored by 1800 Vietnam veterans—

Mark: Thus far, but more all the time—

Jane: There will probably be over 2000.

Paul: And, as I understand you, you are inviting Vietnam veterans from all over the country to come and take part in this?

Mark: Well, today, for example — I mean, Jane has been touring around college campuses, and many veterans have come forward and indicated they would sponsor. She's been touring — and with her in some cities has been Al Hubbard, who's the National Executive Secretary of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. And Jane invites, and Al invites, veterans to come forth after, as sponsors, and also to testify — and a number of veterans have come forward.

Today I spoke at San Fernando Valley State College, and a guy was there who was a prisoner of war interrogator, who told the audience that standard procedure (when he first went there some years ago) was that three Vietnamese would be tied with their hands behind their backs — tied together. One would be just a peasant, who knew nothing; one would be someone who was a "VCS" [Viet Cong suspect], and the other would be someone who they really thought knew something. And they just walked up with a .45 and fired bullets into the head of the peasant, killing him, with the other two tied to him. And then they would kill the VC suspect, and they then would ask the third guy questions. He said this was quite a standard procedure when he first was there. He was there, I think he said, in 1961 — a long time ago.

And then, of course, we've talked to Peter Martinson, who was there much more recently. You can trace it — the technique of questioning has become a little bit more sophisticated. Now they use field telephones as the standard method — with which electrodes are attached to the man's testicles or to the woman's vagina and breasts, and great shocks of electricity are put into the body in that fashion. So they aren't just firing bullets into the head anymore.

Paul: So — they're making "progress."

Mark: Yeah — progress. The technology of the man....

Jane Fonda: A lot of people in America say, "Well, I don't know what you people are talking about — I've talked to many soldiers, and no soldier's ever told me about these kind of things." Well, of course! — what these people don't realize is that a soldier isn't going to volunteer that kind of information, particularly since

most people will not understand that it is because of our general war policy that these things happen, then the soldiers everywhere I go — in Texas recently, for example, in every city that I was in in Texas (I was in Austin, Houston and Dallas) — there were at least ten soldiers who couldn't stop talking about it. They were all needing desperately to be heard — because they're so used to the pain of bearing the guilt as individuals. It must be so incredibly painful — the need to tell American people why these things happen, and the fact that it is violence and crimes that are part of our policy and condoned by our government.

Mark Lane: The clearest example, I think, of American war crimes on a regular, daily basis in Vietnam occurred a few days ago in a UPI dispatch out of Fort Benning [Georgia], where there was the testimony by Major Charles D. Lane (no relative of mine) who's a pathologist who's conducted more than 550 autopsies (he and his team) in Vietnam. The evidence against Calley at that point had shown that Calley, and other men, ordered Vietnamese civilians, mostly women and babies and some old men, into a ditch, and that Calley fired his weapon — an M-16. The M-16 is an automatic rifle, and it's the standard weapon used by the Army, infantry and Marine Corps. All the grunts use this; it's the weapon of the war in Vietnam, just as the M-1 was the weapon of the war for WW II for American forces.

So [the evidence showed] that Calley ordered men to fire, and he himself fired, M-16's, and it was a question as to whether all these people had died from an artillery strike or bombings, or whether they had been killed by the M-16's. Of course no

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autopsy could be performed on them, because more than a year had passed after the massacre even before the press told us what had happened, and much more than that had happened before these men were charged and before there was a trial.

However, there were color photographs taken at the time. And the series of color photographs were shown to Major Lane, the pathologist. (He's a witness for the Army against

Calley.) And he looked at the photographs, and he said he could testify from examining the photographs that the people were killed with M-16's. He went on to explain that the M-16 is an illegal weapon. [He testified that] *an Army weapon, the standard weapon of the war, is an illegal weapon, that it was outlawed by international law more than sixty years ago* — because, like the dum-dum bullet, it fragments when it strikes the bone. In other words, *a bullet going in which strikes the bone, or even soft tissue, explodes and causes a huge exit wound which destroys bone tissue and soft tissue and makes it impossible to treat.* And that was the testimony offered by the United States Army, by a Major for the United States Army, in that case, against Calley.

In other words, what does this mean? It means you can walk onto the battlefield of Vietnam today, if you're a physician, and look at a body, and if the body has been killed by an illegal weapon you know the man who pulled the trigger was an American.

That's the state of America in 1970, I think. Was there an uprising when we read that on a daily basis illegal weapons are used? No. And so we are trying Calley for using an illegal weapon in a fire-free zone, where the orders — which originate not in the Mekong Delta or Saigon, but in Washington, DC, where the war criminals live — the orders are initiated there: in a fire-free zone, shoot to kill: man, woman, child, baby, armed or unarmed — and use an illegal weapon. And this is what Calley, and Taurus* [spelling uncertain], and Mitchell — and the others — have done. And to try them without trying the war criminals would be like having the Judgment at Nuremberg, at which Corporal Schultz and Lt. Schmidt were tried — and they never even mentioned Hitler, Himmler, Goering, Goebbels, Speer.

Who are the war criminals? It's clear. It's not conjecture — according to international law, which is as valid as local law. If you leave this hotel and you drive 100 miles an hour in a zone which is a 35-mile-zone, you have violated the law; it's just that

* TORRES

clear. And if you commit certain acts during a war, which are proscribed by international agreement, by the Nuremberg principles and the Geneva Convention, then you are a war criminal — it's just that simple.

Who are the war criminals? The free-fire zone is a war crime; the use of the M-16 is a war crime; the indiscriminate use of bombing on civilian populations — we're up to, to quote Professor Gabriel Koechel [spelling uncertain], dropping in terms of the equivalent of high explosives equal to two and a half Hiroshimas a week on Southeast Asia.

That's not even including North Vietnam; that's South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Two and a half Hiroshimas a week is what we're dropping there.

So who are the war criminals? Johnson, Humphrey, Nixon, Agnew, McNamara, Rusk, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Westmoreland. Westmoreland more than anyone else, according to the Yamashita Decision. The Yamashita Decision followed WW II. General Yamashita was 700 miles from his troops, and his troops committed atrocities. They were reeling back after one defeat after another, and they committed a series of atrocities. He had no communication with them, as the trial showed — in fact, he had given orders that no such atrocities were to be committed. But they committed them anyway, while he had no contact with them — he had no control over them. He was charged with war crimes because of what his men did. Constructive knowledge: he should have known; he should have been able to overcome the lack of communications: that was the charge. He was convicted — and executed.

Now what about Westmoreland after My Lai? *These are the war criminals* — the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Westmoreland — *and the Administration*. In the first place, he was closer and he had control —

Jane Fonda: He congratulated them; he congratulated Charley Company after My Lai.

Mark Lane: —Sure; he commended them for their marvelous work — they killed all the Viet Cong there. You talk to returning veterans — there are units where you get a three-day pass,

based on the number of kills you get. And then ask them if they killed a Viet Cong. *What's a Viet Cong?* You know what the standard rule of thumb for the American military in Vietnam is? *If you're dead, you're a Viet Cong.* That's how they distinguish Viet Cong from civilians.

In any event, after trying all the Administration —

Paul Eberle: What are you if you're alive?

Mark Lane: A Viet Cong suspect, I suppose.

Jane Fonda: You're on their "Phoenix List."

Mark Lane: —Then, after trying all the heads of the various administrations, and their advisors (those in an executive capacity) and the Joint Chiefs and Westmoreland — then, of course, you really get to the very beginning of the trial, in terms of getting those responsible as we did in Nuremberg — Krupp, right? So here it's the president of Dow Chemical, the president of General Motors, the president of General Dynamics, and all the other industries which are responsible for the war.

And there's no other way to have a war crimes trial. To try Calley and Taurus and Mitchell is a cynical manipulation of the law, which, as Jane says, increases the guilt — these guys come back guilt-ridden. And here is the President of the United States saying, "You should feel guilty — you criminals! Calley, Taurus, Mitchell — you're all criminals!" And who's pointing the finger? The War Criminal — the leading war criminal of them all.

Paul Eberle: The guys who are masterminding the whole thing —

Mark Lane: —are pointing the finger at the people who have done what they told them to do. Before you can try any of these guys, of course, the leadership has to be tried. Of course, the Vietnamese have neither

the capacity nor the slightest aspiration or desire to try Nixon or Humphrey, or the other war criminals, and they will (of course) *never* be tried. All the Vietnamese want is for us to *go home*. The amazing thing that will happen, because the Vietnamese — maybe they always were an extraordinary people, I don't know; but they certainly are an extraordinary people now. You see the Vietnamese in France, and you see the relationship between the French and the Vietnamese, and you realize — you know what the French did to the Vietnamese for so many years — and you can see this extraordinary relationship. And you know it will be the same as ours — that if we could just go home, and leave them alone, in a very short period of time we would have the same close, fraternal relationship with the Vietnamese people.

Paul Eberle: Yeah — but we've killed a million of them.

Mark Lane: *But so did the French.* And, yet — look at the relationship between the French and the Vietnamese. It is *extraordinary!*

Paul: How long have you been working on the book, *Conversations with Americans?*

Mark: I guess about two years.

Paul: Have you been interviewing veterans from the Vietnam action for two or three years now?

Mark: A couple of years, yeah. I have interviewed those who were deserters, living in Sweden, West Germany, France and Canada. And most of the people I've interviewed are either active duty servicemen in the United States, or Vietnam veterans, honorably discharged, who've come back. And you learn things.

Paul: And the book is what these people told you?

Mark: Yes. The book is just them. It's not me; it's just the Vietnam veterans. It's holding up a mirror to America and it's saying, "Look! This is you! Look in this mirror!" And America's response is really, incredible everywhere. [The book] says that these men are traitors. They come back with purple hearts, some without arms, legs, eyes — they come back with all the medals that a grateful government can give them. And they say — now the difficult part begins — they say, *I'm going to tell you what we did.* And that's when America turns her back.

Paul: That's treason.

Mark Lane: That's treason, to tell the truth. I just want to tell you one thing: Things I've learned since the book, actually; things we've all learned in

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talking to veterans. [I want to tell you about] the incredible technological escalation of this war. Nixon has no more thought of leaving Vietnam before 1972 than Johnson did. What Nixon obviously is planning is a vast technological escalation of this war, and if he feels that domestic political considerations require the removal of large numbers of Americans, he's willing to do that. In fact, he *has* to do it. There's relatively no fighting taking place; there's like a silent mutiny sweeping —

Paul: What kind of technological escalation?

Mark: Well, first of all, there are sensing devices called SIDs, which are dropped by planes and fired by artillery. There are millions of these little devices. They are so sensitive that, if one falls into a tree and a bird flies by, it vibrates.

Jane Fonda: A large part of South



WINTER SOLDIER INVESTIGATION

WHAT: An inquiry into U.S. Military Policy in Indochina.

WHEN: January 31, February 1 and 2, 1971.

WHERE: Howard Johnson's New Center Motor Lodge, Detroit, Michigan.

The Winter Soldiers of the American Revolution, unlike the "summer soldiers and sunshine patriots" referred to by Tom Paine, faced up to their responsibility during the long winter at Valley Forge. After our time spent in Vietnam we know that the most difficult and painful part of our service begins now - in telling Americans what is being done in their name.

Join us - former enlisted men and officers from all branches of the military - in sponsoring the investigation. If you have testimony to offer, contact us so that we may arrange for you to come to Detroit on January 31st, 1971.

Vietnam is studded with these little sensors that bleep information back to these massive computer banks on an Air Force base in Saigon. And they can tell if anything is hotter or colder than its surroundings—

Mark Lane: They use a photographic method—

Jane: New smelling devices that hang down beneath helicopters and scoop up air over the top of the jungles.

Mark: That's now been countered: I heard that from a veteran the other day. It's been countered — it's no longer effective. They have a device — it's a scoop under a plane and it picks up smells, and it can show if there are people in the area, what they're cooking, etc. There are chemicals in the scoop which analyze [the air] as they go by. The Vietnamese hang pots of urine on tops of trees, which wipes out the device. Which, as Huey Newton says, proves again — as the Vietnamese people have — that the power of the people is greater than the man's technology.

More than that now: there's an infrared camera — that's how they caught Che Guevara; a CIA plane flying out of Van Nuys. It's an infrared camera which photographs an area — nighttime, daytime makes no difference. They photograph an area with the camera. It's then turned over to photo interpreters who analyze it. It photographs heat — anything hotter or colder than the atmosphere—

Jane: Body heat, animal heat, the heat that's retained in asphalt roads—

Mark: —they show traces of movement. They superimpose this on a map, and they say no one's supposed to be there so it must be a guerrilla band. They are using this very effectively in Vietnam at the present time. And, as Jane said, that's how they caught Che.

Jane: Radar controlled, unmanned aircraft flying missions—

Mark: They have now [August, 1970] — this is classified information, now being declassified for the first time — an IOD, an Intrusion Observation Device. The Army turned it down after it was developed, but the Marine Corps decided they would take it; it's near Da Nang, I believe — the first seven were set up there, by the Marine Corps artillery. I got this from a guy named Bill Forrester, who was a First Lieutenant in the Marine Corps, in charge of one of the artillery batteries.

There are seven batteries there [Da Nang]. They have binoculars attached to electronic gear, attached to a laser beam. They can look out into the jungle, the rice fields, beyond their perimeter up to thirty miles — twenty to thirty miles. And they can see movement out there. They just have to press a button, because the binoculars with the laser beam [are] electronically geared to the artillery battery. When they press a button, there's a series of rounds fired by this one battery. And one series of rounds has a killing radius of 200 meters by 50 meters. Anything in that area will be dead when the rounds are fired. When

they see movement, they can't tell if it's a man, a woman or a child — much less can they tell if it's an enemy soldier or a peasant planting rice.

When it was first set up, they built a huge score board at this Marine base, because there were seven outfits that had them [the IODs], and they would list the kills competitively by each team. It started out with fifteen kills entitled the officer in charge to an automatic bronze star, and lesser commendations for the enlisted men. It's

always lesser for the enlisted men. But the kill count came in so quickly — the competition was so great — that before this guy — Forrester — left, he said that they had changed it to 100 kills required for an automatic bronze star.

This is all part, then, of the vast technological escalation of the war. And in that kind of a war — with infrared cameras, with IODs, with sensing devices — American soldiers in the jungle get in the way. They're really a *detriment*, and that's why they're being brought home. (Another reason, of course, is that the domestic situation will not permit us to keep half a million soldiers there and also have Nixon re-elected.) And the *third* consideration is the guys aren't fighting anyway! In *Conversations with Americans*, there's a story of a guy who tells about how they didn't want to fight anymore. They decided they didn't want to become involved

in the war, although they were over there as infantrymen, and they explained this to an officer. He didn't understand; he led them into a fire fight. So when they came back, the platoon sat around and said, "Let's figure out what the bounty should be." In this case, I think it was \$300. The next time he led them into a fire fight, they killed him. *The men killed their officer* — and the man who did the actual firing, who killed him, got the \$300 bounty.

And I discussed just the problems with the atrocities in Vietnam on a program in Washington, DC — the Fred Fisk show; a very conservative man. He said, "I call upon all you loyal veterans out there — call and tell Mr. Lane that he's not telling the truth."

The first guy [who] called up said, "I was in an infantry outfit and I saw Vietnamese thrown out of helicopters and tortured to death, and it was really horrible." And so Fisk said, "Well, let me ask you this. Did you ever hear of a bounty of \$300 to kill an officer? Ever hear of *that*?"

I was trying to explain to Fisk that not everybody saw everything in Vietnam, but before I could finish the guy broke in and said, "*I never heard of \$300 — in our outfit it was \$250.*" Fisk said, "Are you trying to tell me that every man in your platoon chipped in for the \$250?" He said, "Oh, no. About half the guys refused. Only about half the guys chipped in."

He said, "We killed the officer," and then he said, "When the new officer came in, and everybody knew when they brought the body back that he had been killed by M-16 bullets in the back, the new officer realized that there really shouldn't be any more fire fights. We didn't go out in the jungle one time after that. No more ambushes and no more listening posts. That was the end of our forays."

And what some of the guys do is, officers who understand this when they have to send out a listening post or ambush into the jungle — they'll go out a very short distance from the perimeter and stay there, and radio back and talk about the progress they're making — just making up stories about how far they are. And maybe they're a hundred yards from the base, and they just stay there for a day or two, and then they come back. And sometimes they'll get caught when they come back, because they haven't fired any rounds; what kind of a fire fight was that? So they'll go out a little further, and they'll fire. And one guy said he was quite happy, because when they fired at a non-existent enemy, just in a little grove of trees, one of the bullets hit a tree and ricocheted and came back and hit one of the guys in the leg. And everybody was so happy, because now they had proof of a fire fight. And, of course, he got a Purple Heart for the wound, which was practically self-inflicted. This is part of what's taking place: there's just no more fighting.

Three weeks ago the New York *Times* had a story which said that two days passed without a single American being killed. *How is that possible during a war?* It's not possible during a war — but it's not that kind of war anymore. There's no more of that kind of war taking place anymore, really — 'cause the guys just don't want to do it any more.

Jane Fonda: And despite the concessions that the military has made — as Mark said, no smart officer would

send his men out on a dangerous mission, 'cause he knows he'll get fragged — or would ask his men to cut their hair, or take off their beads, their headbands, and all the paraphernalia that they have — despite that, our desertion rate has tripled in the last three years. The desertion rate now is apparently equivalent to that in the South Vietnamese army.

Paul Eberle: Which is astronomical....

Jane Fonda: We are, in fact, experiencing the Vietnamization of the American combat soldier.

Paul: I understand that the Anti-Imperialist Delegation, headed by Eldridge Cleaver, said that one of the things they found out in North Vietnam, one of the devices the Americans are using, is something they call a "flutter bomb." And what it is, is little cloth pellets, or something, that don't explode when they hit the ground; and they're brightly colored. And they're not effective against the military, because the military knows what they are and adults know what they are; they see what they are and they don't bother them. But they attract children, because they're brightly colored little cloth things, or something. And the kids pick them up and an arm gets blown off, or they step on them and a leg gets blown off. And the North Vietnamese theory is that what they are attempting to do is, by permanently damaging large segments of the population — the children — they make them lifetime economic burdens on the entire society, and are thereby hoping to debilitate the people's will to continue to fight.

Mark Lane: I talked with a guy — in fact, it's in the book — a Marine, who told me they would drive through small villages and hamlets. They have these things to heat up C-rations, which I'm not familiar with personally because they didn't have them during WW II. They're little white phosphorous, I guess — they look like mints. You light them, and they burn with such a great heat that you can't even see that they're on fire. And he said that they would light these things, and little Vietnamese kids would follow the trucks, asking, "Candy, Joe — do you have candy?" And they would light these things and throw them out, and the kids would pick them up — and the lighters would burn right through the kids' hands. Today, when I was speaking at San Fernando [Valley State College], a guy came up and said, "I was in the Army, I want to tell you what we did there," and he told me that same story. But he hasn't read the book because it's an underground book, which has not been reviewed by the *Los Angeles Times*, and no one knows it's been published. This is Simon and Schuster's first underground book, as a matter of fact, and they didn't intend it that way. But this guy told me the story, quite independently of that, exactly the same story — except he said *his* army unit did it, instead of the Marines doing it.

Paul Eberle: What about chemical-biological warfare — Is that being used?

Mark: Defoliants — but we all know that.

Paul: What about bacteria and nerve gas and stuff like that? Any evidence that that's being used?

Mark: I haven't come across any such thing.

Jane Fonda: But there's recent evidence that the defoliants that were outlawed are still being used.

Paul Eberle: There have also been rumors of epidemics breaking out mysteriously.

Mark Lane: When we were arranging for the "Winter Soldier Investigation," and I was in Paris talking to some of the members of the National Liberation Front, the PRG and the North Vietnamese government, I said, "One of the problems that we have is that a lot of GIs don't even know — they know they were involved in a massacre, but they don't know the name of the hamlet, or the village or the city. All they know is that they were, like, 35 or 40 miles southeast of Saigon, and there was a village." And I said, "We would like to get survivors of these massacres, if it's possible, so that when the veterans testify there can be testimony as it was seen through the eyes of a victim." I said, "If we say, '35, 40 miles southeast of Saigon,' for example, would that be sufficient for you to locate the village or the hamlet?" And the woman said, "No"; she said, "Actually, something like this has taken place in almost every single hamlet and village in South Vietnam."

That's how insidious massacres of this kind are — 25, 30 people are killed. You'd have to be much more definite — and there are so many little villages and hamlets around in an area 25 or 30 miles away in a general direction that it would be impossible. It's just such a continual operation now — which you hear from veterans, anyway. I always hear this: Bob Dornan said it the other day: "You've only interviewed 300, perhaps, out of 2 million — that's hardly a cross-section, right?" Well, that's true. I've interviewed 300, and I've learned about 200 massacres — *from just interviewing 300 people.*

What would I have learned if I had interviewed 2 million people? The Vietnamese have press conferences, in Hanoi and Paris, about massacres. They had a press conference four days after My Lai, and they said 507 people did it — it was Charley Company, and they knew the outfit and everything — and it was all in the press release, which I have, their original press release. It wasn't even published — not one American newspaper, radio station or television station even denied that it happened or said this is a propaganda release. The Vietnamese don't have a press conference for every massacre. In fact, you know what their definition of a massacre is? An action in which more than 100 men, women and children have been killed. Anything less than [that] doesn't qualify as a massacre in terms of holding a press conference, because otherwise they'd have ten a day. If it's been 20 people, 35 people, 10 people, rounded up and killed — there'd be no way to have press relations. So that's their definition.

Steve Jaffe: Tell about the structure of the "Winter Soldier Investigation" — and, also, if North Vietnamese are going to testify and, if so, how.

Jane Fonda: First of all — yes, there are going to be Vietnamese, from the North and the South, coming to Windsor, Canada, to testify.

Steve Jaffe: Why Windsor, Canada?

Jane: It's five minutes away from Detroit — it's just across the river from Detroit. Of course, they can't come into the United States—

Mark Lane: —because the American government will not give them visas.

Jane: There will either be a closed circuit television hookup, or some kind of a videotape thing that will be brought over immediately.

Mark: It may be that the CBC will broadcast it live.

Jane: They will be coming from all over the country. Right now there are fifty testimonies and, by the time it

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takes place, there will probably be many more, from all over the country, coming to Detroit to testify during these three days.

The testimony will be divided into five categories: prisoner of war; strata level bombing; pacification program; chemical and biological warfare; and there's a fifth category that I can't remember. It will be open to the public and to the press. It will be going on from morning to night in different rooms.

Mark Lane: At the very end, on the last day, the Vietnam veterans — many of whom when they last saw Vietnamese were killing them — will cross the river into Windsor and have dinner with the Vietnamese survivors. And they will also enter into a symbolic peace treaty, on behalf of the Vietnamese survivors of the massacres and the American army veterans. And that will be a very moving moment, of course.

There are various ideas being explored — the possibility of having this covered like the last championship prize fight, to have it shown simultaneously on college campuses all over the country. That's one possibility that we're working on.

Paul: What are the dates of the investigation?

Mark: January 31, February 1 and February 2. Jan. 31 is the anniversary of the Tet Offensive — which is why the Vietnam veterans, themselves, chose that date; they think it's quite a significant date.

Paul: Who should people in Los Angeles contact if they want to be involved in the organization, or to do any work, or to go to Detroit?

Mark Lane: They can write directly to—

Winter Soldier Investigation
967 Emerson Street
Detroit, Michigan 48215

—or they can write to—

Vietnam Veterans
Against the War
156 Fifth Avenue

New York, New York 10010.

Or, if they want to get something together in Los Angeles, they can contact—

Louise Monaco
C/o Los Angeles Free Press
7813 Beverly Blvd.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90036.

There will be a Vietnam veteran here; don't know exactly who — I think there may be someone here now. Maybe there's some way to get this on the college campuses here. At San Fernando, they told me there are many, many veterans there. After I finished speaking — there was a very small turnout — there was no notice that I was even coming; it wasn't handled as well as it might have been — but there were six veterans there, out of about twelve people in the audience. They just came up, and they talked.

Paul Eberle: And you would like to make it known around the country? The *Free Press* is read all over the United States. And you would like to make it known all over the country that veterans and other people are welcome to come and participate?

Mark Lane: Yeah — sure. Anyone who has information to give about war crimes will be questioned very closely, and we'll try to secure corroboration from other people in his outfit and examine all his documents — and everything. We're very serious about only putting on testimony which we believe to be completely sound and valid. And those who testify will also be cross-examined by the press.

Jane Fonda: There will also be a panel just concerning the prisoner-of-war issue, since that seems to be the current tool that the administration is using to arouse the American public to support an escalation of the war. There will be people who have been to Hanoi, and have brought back the few prisoners who have come back, who will be testifying. A man who was a prisoner in North Vietnam will testify—

Mark Lane: He was a prisoner of the National Liberation Front [NLF] in South Vietnam for two years. We believe he will testify. There will be testimony as to how the Americans treat the prisoners of war in the South, and how the American soldiers in the Army stockades in this country are treated—

Jane: —and in Vietnam, and West Germany, and Japan and Okinawa — and bombing experts to talk about

what, in fact, the professional bombers are doing.

Steve Jaffe: Has the US government as yet presented any resistance or obstacles to the "Winter Soldier Investigation"?

Mark Lane: They arrested our chief fundraiser on her first day back into the country. FONDA?

Paul Eberle: Do you think they're going to arrest us all, eventually?

Mark Lane: I don't know. Of course, that's their plan—

Paul: That's their secret—

Mark Lane: That's their plan: I don't think it's a secret anymore.

Paul: Attorney General Mitchell said that this country is going to go so far to the right that you won't recognize it any more. That's a verbatim quote.

Mark Lane: In two years, I don't recognize it already.

Jane Fonda: Since it was the peace movement that forced Johnson to resign in '68 — to *abdicate* in '68 — since Nixon obviously doesn't intend to end the war and is in the process of escalating it incredibly, and since the war will be continuing, most probably (if things are left up to him) in 1972 — the only thing he can do [to] avoid the same fate that Johnson faced is to totally discredit the peace movement — to make us all into a bunch of lunatic criminals. And that's what he is doing right now. Just in the last two years, the people — whether it's the Berrigans; no matter what ilk you are — the peace movement is being made to look like a bunch of traitors. And it may very well be that, in order to be reelected in 1972, if he doesn't cancel the elections, if in fact the—

Mark Lane: —the Rand Feasibility Study [on canceling the 1972 elections reported in the *Free Press* two months ago]—

Jane Fonda: —doesn't permit him to cancel the elections—

Mark Lane: Suppose this data comes back marked "not feasible"?

Jane Fonda: Then he'll have to put us all in jail.

Paul Eberle: As early as twelve months ago, in November of 1969, Nixon made a speech in which he said that it was not the Vietnamese who prevented us from winning the war. He said no Vietnamese could stop the American army; it was the traitors of the peace movement who betrayed us and stabbed us in the back. I'm paraphrasing, but this is typical Nixon style. I've studied Nixon's career very carefully and researched it a great deal. Going back into the fifties — the witch hunts and the smear campaigns that he was hired to do by the military, industrial Mafia — this is very characteristic of Nixon: to smear the opponent to the point, using the propaganda organs, where you can initiate a popular pogrom — a popular lynch mob against those who dissent, or against your political enemies.

Mark Lane: I'm not even sure that that's even going to be necessary. I'm not sure that America is not willing to accept a technological escalation, as long as it means bringing Americans back. One of the generals said Vietnamization of the war merely means changing the color of the corpses. I don't know if we are ready to accept that in America. I think maybe we are ready to accept that.

Paul: If it means full employment and lots of paychecks.

Mark: Except we're not having full employment and we're not having lots of paychecks — that's one of the problems. I think the most serious problem the Nixon administration has to deal with really is the economic situation — the depression that we're in now — the depression that is just ahead, possibly.

Paul: It's out of control now; four years ago they might have knocked it out, if they had grabbed a few of the early leaders of the peace movement. But I think it's out of control now. There are people marching in Texas, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Ohio — young people against the war. I think it's beyond their control now.

Mark: They'd better do more than march!

Jane: In a referendum during the recent elections in Detroit, 63% of the people of Detroit voted for immediate unilateral withdrawal.

Mark: The fifth largest city, and the number one working class town — and the vote was even higher in the working class areas than that.

Paul: And that's a city that depends heavily on the war industry.

Mark: The prime war criminal is there — General Motors — I mean, "corporation."

Steve Jaffe: How is the "Winter Soldier Investigation" being financed?

Mark Lane: In a couple of ways. The original funds — all of the original funds, really — were secured through Jane's lecture tours. She's paid very well for lecturing in colleges, and all of the money which she was paid went directly to the WSI at first, and the rest of what she was paid went to support the GI office in Washington — the one that Jane and I helped to start, and Don Duncan and Marilee Moorehead and Roger Priest are now running to represent, to collect information regarding GIs who have been harassed and persecuted because of their opposition to the war. In addition to that, now, there are parties and things like that taking place — and individual contributions.

Jane Fonda: I will be coming to

UCLA in February.

Paul Eberle: Of all the interviews you've conducted, of people who've been in Vietnam and witnessed atrocities — which one sticks out most in your mind?

Mark Lane: It's in the book — just read the book. They're just so horrible! It was a very hard book to write — although it was easy to write, in terms of doing nothing more than recording stories. It was a very hard book. It became one year of solid discussion of atrocities — it was a very hard year for me. I want *everyone* to hear about it — it's affected me. That book was held up for two months — you know why? Because when the proofs came back, and I had to read the proofs — I couldn't do it. It took me two months to get into those proofs. When you read the book you'll see what I mean.

Carolyn and I were in Sweden; we interviewed a couple of guys there. We would come out of a house and she would sit in the car and she would cry. She's pretty tough, but she would cry for, maybe, an hour. It was just so incredible to hear these guys tell you what they had done. These are guys who a year and a half before took their girlfriend out for a soda — and then, six months after that, they were raping little girls and killing old men and torturing them in the most barbaric ways. Now some of them have come back and said, "We want to tell you what we've done — what *you've* made us do." And, in essence, their parents say *No*.

I started to tell you about this Fisk [radio] show. Nine guys called up. He said, "Clear the lines. I just want the veterans to come in and answer Lane." Eight of them said it was worse than that — and they told *their own* atrocities, some of which were worse than anything I've heard before. The ninth guy called up and said "I'm a loyal Marine," and all that, and "You're only telling a one-sided picture — what about the *good* things we've done?" I said, "What are the good things?" And he said, "We've built orphan asylums." I said, "What do we need them for? *What happened to their parents?*" He said, "It's one-sided — you know you should not blame us; we're told what to do" — and it became like we're not primarily responsible. So I said, "Yeah, I didn't say you were." And he said, "I just tuned in." I said, no; I went through that already — and I went through it again. So he said, "Oh, well, if you're talking about *that* — then let me tell you this. You spend nine months in a trench, and the leeches are biting you, and everyone hates you — the kids hate you, *everyone* hates you. You become an animal. *Then* you do the raping and the murdering and the massacres and the torturing—" I said, "That *you* did?" He said, "Yeah, I did that — we *all* did. . . ." This was the one guy who called up to defend. So then it was nine out of nine. This was the Fred Fisk Show in Washington, DC — a very conservative guy. It was the station Fred Gayle was on — but they kicked him out. He was a very decent guy; that's why they kicked him out. They

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brought in this guy [Fisk] who was a lifer — a radio lifer. He was just in the news and they thought he would be very safe — and he was. I think the only mistake he's made was to have me on his program. After two hours talking to nine veterans, my time was up, and I left, and I put the radio on driving back to the hotel. He had one hour left, and he said, "Okay; no more veterans — forget it, veterans; I don't want to hear any more veterans." And then you heard the older people calling, attacking Fisk: "I didn't know you were a traitor, Fisk." He said, "What? *Me?*" — "Yeah — yeah, you have all these traitor, commie punks on—" And then you heard the next eight or nine people, until the program was off — who were, in essence, the parents of the people who had admitted what they had done, saying, "We don't believe it." It's like the Agnew domestic policy is a message to the parents that you cannot trust your own children. This was a microcosm of America. The kids came back and said we did this horrible thing and we have to tell you — this has to stop. And the parents are calling and saying, "We don't believe they did it." They just won't believe it. So I guess that's where America is now.

Steve Jaffe: Are you aware that the American Psychoanalytic Association — I think that's the title of the organization — had a convention in San Francisco recently, and that the first order of business which they took care of was to make a policy statement on behalf of all the psychiatrists in the country of their opposition to the war, and to record what happened to guys over there? Perhaps you could have someone testify [at the Winter Soldier Investigation] about what's happened to the heads of the guys who've come back?

Mark Lane: Someone called today to say that one of the radio stations in town, which is running an interview with me, is also running with it an interview with Dr. William Goldsmith,

of Cedars-Sinai Hospital. He's evidently a psychiatrist who's examined a lot of guys and who says that they're coming back, after having committed atrocities, with their heads completely out of kilter. And they may never be the same, and so forth. And it's being run over the air here — apparently quite regularly now. I think that's a very important aspect of the investigation. [To Monique:] What do you think about the whole idea of the investigation?

Monique Truong Miller: I think, since the Vietnamese themselves don't have the opportunity to say what they see and what they witness, it's very good that Americans who have been there and who have done or witnessed atrocities are able to come home and tell them.

Steve Jaffe: I would like to suggest that the *Free Press* appeal to the college editors from every college and university in the United States to have their Associated Student Body Fund finance a trip for them to the Winter Soldier Investigation, so that every student newspaper in the country can cover it in detail.