

TRUTH IN 'RUSH TO JUDGMENT'
WILL ALARM, SWAY SKEPTICS

By Stephanie Sherman

Rush to Judgment, Mark Lane,
(Holt, Rinehart and Winston) \$5.95.

Having little faith in the honesty of lawyers, particularly criminal defense lawyers; and having substantially more faith in the integrity of the United States government; I approached Mark Lane's Rush to Judgment with more than the proverbial grain of salt.

This book, subtitled A Critique of the Warren Commission's inquiry into the Murders of President John F. Kennedy, Officer J.D. Tippit and Lee Harvey Oswald, was reported to be an objective criticism of the Warren investigation. Exactly how objective -- indeed how truthful -- the counsel for Oswald's defense could be under the circumstances was a point over which I had grave doubts.

On the one hand, the Warren Commission, comprised of influential, well known and respected individuals, claims to have examined the events of the assassination period fully, with the aid of the FBI -- an agency famous for its ability at searching out facts. It then produced a report based on fact.

Seeking the Truth

On the other hand, a New York lawyer, of whom I know nothing and who was the defense attorney for Oswald, accuses the Commission of shameful conduct in all aspects of the investigation. With my already-formed opinion as to the credibility of this book, I began reading with the sole intent of finding fault.

By the end of Chapter 1, however, my stubborn desire to discredit his attack on the Commission had been totally destroyed. It is apparent in these first few pages that Mr. Lane is seeking not the truth of Oswald's innocence per se, but the truth.

Lane has done an extremely masterful job of presenting the evidence on both sides. Using documented evidence, presented to the Commission, the Commission's own investigation, and evidence gathered from his own search, Lane manages to convince even this very skeptical reader of the validity of his concluding remarks as to the merit of the Warren Commission: "The Commission disregarded these rules and principles (of evidence), making no explanation and adopting no substitute. Hearsay evidence was freely admitted, while crucial eyewitness testimony was excluded. Opinions were sought and solemnly published, while important facts were rejected, distorted or ignored.

"Dubious scientific tests were said to have proved that which no authentic test could do. Friendly witnesses gave testimony without fear of criticism or cross-examination, were led through their paces by lawyers who, as the records show, helped to prepare their testimony in advance and were asked leading questions; while those few who challenged the Government's case were often harassed and transformed for the time being into defendants. Important witnesses with invaluable evidence to give were never called, and the secrecy which prevailed at the hearings was extended, in respect to many important details, for another 75 years."

Shock and Shame

A sense of shock and rage at being denied an honest search for the truth inevitably overcomes the reader to Rush to Judgment. But worse is the sense of shame and guilt for the complacency with which the obviously untrue Warren Report has been accepted.

I began reading this book to prove the validity of the Warren Report. However, the blatant dishonesty ~~in~~ the Commission's investigation, the obviously distorted evidence, and especially the disregard of the scientific facts presented by the Commission's own investigators when it differed from their prior-to-investigation conclusions, shocked me. I now realize that the report is a deception of the American people and a criminal attempt to subvert the right of the people to seek the truth.

Lane does not claim to have any theories as to who killed the President or why; he claims and proves beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the American people have been denied the right to search for the true facts of November 22, 1963.

Rush To Judgment is not a book; it is an emotional experience. No American reading it can ever again accept the Warren Commission Report as having any semblance of truth. The people of this country owe Lane an ~~un~~unrepayable debt for giving them this second chance at their right to be told the truth by their government.