

Memphis 2/26/71

Interview with Guy Warren Canipe 2/24, Jim Lesar present

= Canipe began by saying he didn't want to add anything to his official statements. He declined for me to tape him and I didn't. However, as we chatted, he did give me rather interesting information, on all essential points contradictory to the affidavit prepared for his signature (he says he doesn't recall who prepared it). He says the door was closed (and Jowers told me today that Canipe customarily kept it closed). He says the package was open, and the C-A pictures confirm that. He acknowledges that he had told a public-defenders' investigator that the package was there about 10 minutes before the first deputy arrived at the scene, which could not have been more than two-four minutes after the shot. It was deputy sheriff Gormley, who was in the fire house (he was then a lieutenant and there is no official accounting of any sheriffs there). This means, of course, that the package was there before the shooting.

Canipe said he saw the word "Browning" on the box and assumed it was an automatic shotgun. He says he heard a thud, but that is not likely. Others quote him as saying he saw somebody laying the package down. His own account is that he didn't recognize the car he soon saw seemingly leaving the curbside, and he did not call it a Mustang. His description of the man he says he saw only from the back does not identify anybody and cannot, nor does he say or indicate he believes otherwise. He says he doesn't know who it was.

Although Canipe has the reputation for talkativeness his willingness to say anything after saying he would not say anything does confirm, he was also quite obviously trying to chat without saying anything. I got the impression that he had been told to say nothing. There were things he could have safely said that he didn't, i.e., that the police took the local witnesses to the station for questioning (as Bertie Reeves told me). He did say that Stephens was pretty drunk, even for him.

I asked him about the clock and he says it was working. It was when I was there, and he doesn't look like the kind who would waste money repairing an unnecessary clock. Nothing else seemed either clean or in good repair.

He said he did not hear the shot. If he didn't, he certainly didn't hear the soft cloth strike the paving, even if the contents were heavy. I suspect his reason is because he did not hear it from the official position.

I did tell him of the misuse made of him and today I told him (without indicating source) that I had found pictures entirely supporting his word to me and refuting that as prepared for him to swear to.