

Inez Robb Says

Shot That Killed Lee Oswald Nearly Ended Career Of Dallas Police Chief

ALLAS—Shortly after 11 a.m. on the morning of Nov. 24 a Texas-big man swung out of his Texas-big office on the third floor of the Municipal Building and headed for an elevator that would take him to the basement of the building.



Before he could get to the elevator bank, Chief Mrs. Robb of Police Jesse Curry was intercepted by his secretary who said that the mayor of Dallas was on the phone and wished to speak with him.

Chief Curry was still on the phone, speaking with the mayor, when a dazed aid rushed in around 11:25 a.m. to say that the most famous prisoner in America, Lee Harvey Oswald, had just been shot in the basement of the building, which also serves as the city jail.

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HIS REACTION to the astonishing news?

"Disbelief," said Chief Curry when I talked with him in his office. "Just plain disbelief, after all the precautions that had been taken to transfer him from jail to the county prison. I thought every precaution had been taken.—"

"I don't think anyone in this century had been subject to such pressure or demand for 'instant news,'" Chief Curry continued in his low-key manner. "It had reached the point where the news media were trying to satisfy the public which felt it had the right to witness or participate in events as they occurred.

"As a result of Oswald's killing, I am sure a different standard of police policy in handling news media has been set up all over the world; not just here."

and harshly blamed for Oswald's death.

Because he had yielded to the pressure of news media to transfer the prisoner in broad daylight, for the benefit of television and news cameras, he was branded "first and foremost, as a publicity 'hog.'"

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IT WAS SUCH a klieg-light character I expected to meet when I went to his office. As an experienced reporter I can spot a publicity hog at 5,000 paces. But the police officer I met has none of the attributes of such headline-happy looks.

"I did what I thought was best at the time," he said quietly, and with a trace of bitterness. "I would do it differently now. Sure, hindsight is wonderful.

"The news media was rather demanding. They put the heat on," Chief Curry went on. "To show that we weren't abusing the suspect in any way, as was hinted, we decided to move him as we did. Had it not been for such pressure, Oswald would have been transferred in the presence of police officers only."

At the time of Oswald's murder in the basement of the police station, Chief

Curry had never seen Jack Ruby. Oddly enough, he was not to see the man—his nemesis—until a few weeks ago when the police chief was subpoenaed to testify in the Ruby bond hearing.

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THIS SOFT-SPOKEN

Texas giant entered the Dallas police force as a rookie on May 1, 1936, and steadily worked his way to the top, with time out to study police work at the Traffic Institute of Northwestern University, at the FBI National Academy, at Texas A. and M. and Dallas' Southern Methodist University. He has been and is an officer of national and international police associations.

On Nov. 24 his career seemed ended. But the mayor of Dallas, its city manager and the city council, stood behind him to a man. "They think I did what I thought best even if I was wrong," he said.

ON THAT MORNING OF