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PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION
ON THE
ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Report of Proceedings
Held At
Dallas, Texas
Sunday, June 7, 1964

Pages 1 - 103

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PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION
ON THE
ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Dallas, Texas
Sunday, June 7, 1964
11:45 A.M.-2:50 P.M.

The President's Commission met, pursuant to recess,
at 11:45 A.M. in the interrogation room of the Dallas County
Jail, Main & Houston Streets, Dallas, Texas.

PRESENT:

Chief Justice Earl Warren

J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel

Congressman Gerald R. Ford, Michigan

Elmer W. Moore, Special Agent, U. S. Secret Service

Joseph A. Ball, Staff Counsel

Arlen Specter, Staff Counsel

Robert G. Storey, Counsel

Leon Jaworski, Counsel

Jim Bowie, Assistant District Attorney

Joe H. Tonahill, Counsel representing Jack Ruby

Sheriff Bill Decker

E. L. Holman, Chief Jailer

Orvill Smith, Deputy Sheriff assigned to Jack Ruby

Helen Laidrich, Reporter

1
2 MR. JACK RUBY: Without a lie detector test on my
3 testimony, my verbal statements to you, how do you know if
4 I am telling the truth?

5 MR. TONAHILL: Don't worry about that, Jack.

6 MR. RUBY: Just a minute, gentlemen.

7 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: You wanted to ask something,
8 did you, Mr. Ruby?

9 MR. RUBY: I would like to be able to get a lie
10 detector test or truth serum of what motivated me to do
11 what I did at that particular time, and it seems as you
12 get further into something, even though you know what you
13 did, it operates against you somehow, brain washes you,
14 that you are weak in what you want to tell the truth
15 about and what you want to say which is the truth.

16 Now Mr. Warren, I don't know if you got any
17 confidence in the lie detector test and the truth serum
18 and so on.

19 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I can't tell you just how
20 much confidence I have in it, because it depends so much
21 on who is taking it and so forth.

22 But I will say this to you, that if you and your
23 counsel want any kind of test, I will arrange it for you.
24 I would be glad to do that, if you want it.

25 I wouldn't suggest a lie detector test to testify

1 the truth. We will treat you just the same as we do any
2 other witness, but if you want such a test, I will arrange
3 for it.

4 MR. RUBY: I do want it. Will you agree to that,
5 Joe?

6 MR. TONAHILL: I sure do, Jack.

7 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Any kind of a test you want
8 to verify what you say, we will be glad to do.

9 MR. RUBY: I want it even if you put me into a
10 sort of drowsiness so you can question me as to anything
11 pertaining to my involvement in this particular act.

12 MR. TONAHILL: Jack, you have wanted to do that
13 from the very beginning, haven't you?

14 MR. RUBY: Yes. And the reason why I am asking
15 for that is, -- are you limited for time?

16 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, we have all the time
17 you want.

18 MR. RUBY: As it started to trial -- I don't know
19 if you realize my reasoning, how I happened to be involved
20 I was carried away tremendously emotionally, and all the
21 time I tried to ask Mr. Belli, I wanted to get up and say
22 the truth regarding the steps that led me to do what I
23 have got involved in, but since I have a spotty background
24 in the night club business, I should have been the last
25 person to ever want to do something that I had been involved

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in.

In other words, I was carried away tremendously.

You want to ask me questions?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: You tell us what you want, and then we will ask you some questions.

MR. RANKIN: I think he ought to be sworn.

MR. RUBY: Am I boring you?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Go ahead. All right, Mr. Ruby, tell us your story.

MR. RUBY: That particular morning -- where is Mr. Moore -- I had to go down to the News Building, getting back to this -- I don't want to interrupt.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: What morning do you mean?

MR. RUBY: Friday morning, the starting of the tragedy.

Mr. Belli evidently did not go into my case thoroughly circumstantially. If he had gone into it, he wouldn't have tried to vindicate me on an insanity plea to relieve me of all responsibility, because circumstantially everything looks so bad for me.

It can happen -- it happens to many people who happen to be at the wrong place at the right time.

Had Mr. Belli spent more time with me, he would have realized not to try to get me out completely free; at the time we are talking, technically, how attorneys operate.

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CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I understand.

MR. RUBY: Different things came up, flashed back into my mind, that it dirtied my background, that Mr. Belli and I decided -- oh yes, when I went to say that I wanted to get on the stand and tell the truth what happened that morning, he said, "Jack, when they get you on the stand, you are actually speaking of a premeditated crime that you involved yourself in."

But I didn't care, because I wanted to tell the truth.

He said, "When the Prosecution gets you on the stand, they will cut you to ribbons."

So naturally, I had to retract, and he fought his way to try to vindicate me out of this particular crime.

You follow that?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes, I do indeed.

MR. RUBY: I want you to question me and requestion me on anything you want, plus the fact I do want the tests when they are available.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes.

MR. RUBY: On Friday, the morning parade -- this goes back to Thursday night, because it has something to do with it.

We were having dinner at the Egyptian Restaurant --

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Right now, Mr. Ruby, before we get started taking your testimony, would you mind being

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1 sworn?

(Chief Justice Warren and Jack Ruby stand and both raise their right hand.)

2
3 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Do you solemnly swear that

4 the testimony you are about to give before the Commission
5 will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth,
6 so help you God?

7 MR. RUBY: I do.

8 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Now will you please state

9 whether the things you have just told us are true under
10 your oath?

11 MR. RUBY: I do so state they are the truth.

12 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Now you complete whatever

13 story you want to tell.

14 MR. RUBY: All right. Thursday night I was

15 having dinner at the Egyptian Restaurant on Mockingbird

16 Lane, and a fellow comes over to the table. I was sitting

17 with a guy by the name of Ralph Paul. He tried to invite

18 me to the Club a couple of doors down and I refused,

19 because he had taken a band away from me that had been

20 engaged for seven years, and I felt it was a lost cause,

21 that the Club would be failing because of that, and I

22 of excused myself and I refused to go over to the Club.

23 We finished our dinner, and I went down to the

24 Club that I operated, the Carousel, and this particula
25

1 Master of Ceremonies happened to be there at the time
2 we discussed a few things.

3 And there is a columnist by the name of Tony Zoppi --
4 and prior to that, I wrote out a full page copy of this build
5 -- I have the copies -- as an MC, and I brought a picture
6 and brochure, and Tony said, "I will write a story."

7 This was done two days prior to this Thursday night.

8 So then I went down, so we discussed it and were
9 very much disgusted with Tony because he only gave us a
10 build of one or two lines.

11 Well, I retired that night after closing the Club.

12 Then I knew I wanted to go back to the Morning News Building
13 to get the brochure I left, and also this complete page of
14 longhand writing describing the various talents of this
15 Bill DeMarr. 7/21/44

16 I picked up the brochure that Friday morning, and
17 I also had business at the News Building on Friday because
18 that is the start of the weekend, which is very lucrative,
19 the weekend.

20 I have ways of making my ads of where they have a
21 way of selling the product I am producing or putting on
22 on the show.

23 So I went down there Friday morning to Tony Zoppi's
24 office, and they said he went to New Orleans for a couple
25 of days.

1 I picked up the brochure. I believe I got downtown
2 there at 10:30 or 11:00 o'clock that morning. And I took
3 the brochure and then went into the main room where we compose
4 our ads. That is the sales room where we placed our ads.

5 And I remained there for a while. I started to write
6 the copy of my ad.

7 Now I go back to the same fellow that wanted me to
8 come over to the Club when we were having our dinner on
9 Mockingbird at the Egyptian Lounge.

10 I came to the desk and I wanted to apologize and
11 explain why I didn't accept his invitation last night. I
12 wanted to explain, and that took about twenty or twenty-five
13 minutes. All this is pertaining to everything prior to the
14 terrible tragedy that happened.

15 I started to explain to him why I didn't want to go
16 there, because this fellow mentioned -- Tony, I think -- I
17 can't think of his last name -- of me having his band so many
18 years, and I felt at the moment I didn't want to go over to
19 the Club because I didn't care to meet this fellow.

20 And he started to apologize, "Jack, I am sorry, I did
21 work for the fellow and we have been advertising him for that
22 Club, and I am putting out a night club book."

23 I remained with him for twenty or twenty-five minutes
24 talking there. I don't know whether my ad was completed or
25 not. It was an ad on the Vegas and the Carousel.

1 My ads were completed, I believe, and after finishing
2 my conversation with him, he left.

3 Suddenly the man that completes my ads for me, that
4 helps me with it on occasion -- but I usually make it up
5 myself -- but the person that takes the money for the ads --
6 this is the reason it is so hard for me to meet a deadline
7 when I get downtown to the News Building. And as a rule,
8 I have to pay cash for my ads.

9 When you are in debt, it is necessary, and they will
10 not put it in unless you pay cash.

11 And consequently, the weekend, I had been to town on
12 that particular day. All this adds up later on, as I will
13 state why I didn't go to the parade.

14 In the first place, I don't want to go where there is
15 big crowds. I can't explain it to you. If I was interested
16 I would have seen it on television, our beloved President
17 and all the parade that transpired.

18 But all that adds up why it is important for me to be
19 in the News Building.

20 I owe the government quite a bit of money, and it is
21 doing business out of your pocket, supposedly, in the slang
22 expression.

23 Well, John Newman comes in, and evidently he took it
24 for granted I finished my ad, and I don't recall if he paid
25 for his ad, and suddenly there is some milling around. I

1 think it was 12:00 or fifteen minutes after 12:00, I don't
2 recall what, but John Newman said someone had been shot.

3 And I am sorry, I got carried away. It is the first
4 time I got carried away, because I had been under pressure.

5 And someone else came running over and he said a
6 Secret Service man was shot, or something to that effect.

7 And I am there in the middle with John Newman, because
8 Newman isn't paying any attention to anyone else, and there
9 is a lot of going back and forth.

10 So someone must have made a statement that Governor
11 Connally was shot. I don't recall what was said. And I
12 was in a state of hysteria, I mean.

13 You say, "Oh my God, it can't happen." You carry on
14 crazy sayings.

15 There was a little television set in one office not
16 far away from where I had been sitting at the desk. I ran
17 over there and noticed a little boy and a little sister say,
18 "I was standing right there when it happened." I mean,
19 different things you hear on the television.

20 Then the phone started ringing off the desk and I
21 heard John Newman say people were complaining about the ad,
22 why they accepted this ad.

23 (A tray of water and glasses was brought in.)

24 Thank you.

25 Has every witness been this hesitant in trying to

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1 explain the story?

2 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: You are doing very well. I
3 can understand why you have to reflect upon a story of that
4 length.

5 MR. RUBY: The phones were ringing off the desk
6 calling various ads, and they were having a turmoil in that
7 News Building because of a person by the name of Bernard
8 Weisman placing that particular ad, a full page ad.

9 I am sure you are familiar with the ad.

10 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes, I am.

11 MR. RUBY: Criticizing a lot of things about our
12 beloved President. Then John Newman and I and another
13 gentleman walked over to another part of the room, and I
14 heard John Newman say, "I told him not to take that ad."
15 Something to that effect.

16 Then he said, "Well, you have seen him pay part cash
17 and come back and pay the balance."

18 Now everything is very vague to me as to when this
19 transpired; after they heard the President had been shot,
20 or prior to that.

21 You know it's been a long time, and I am under a very
22 bad mental strain here.

23 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes.

24 MR. RUBY: From the time that we were told that the
25 President was shot, thirty-five minutes later they said he

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1 had passed away. In the meantime, I became very emotional.
2 I called my sister at home. She was carried away terribly
3 bad. And John Newman happened to be there, and I know it
4 is a funny reaction you have, you want other people to feel
5 that you feel emotionally disturbed the same way as other
6 people, so I let John listen to the phone that my sister was
7 crying hysterically.

8 And I said to John, I said, "John, I will have to
9 leave Dallas." I don't know why I said that, but it is a
10 funny reaction that you feel, the City is terribly let down
11 by the tragedy that happened.

12 And I said, "John, I am not opening up tonight."

13 And I don't know what else transpired there. I know
14 people were just heartbroken.

15 I left the room. I may have left out a few things.
16 Mr. Moore remembers probably more, but you come back and
17 question me and maybe I can answer those questions.

18 I left the building and I went down and I got my car,
19 and I couldn't stop crying, because naturally when I pulled
20 up to a Stop light and other people would be adjacent to me,
21 I wouldn't want them to see me crying, because it looked kind
22 of artificial.

23 And I went to the Club and I came up, and I may have
24 made a couple of calls from there. I could have called my
25 colored boy, Andy, down at the Club. I could have -- I don't

1 know who else I would have called, but I could have, because
2 it is so long now since my mind is very much warped now.

3 You think that literally?

4 I went up to the Club, and I told Andy, I said, "Call
5 everyone and tell them we are not opening."

6 We have a little girl in Fort Worth I wanted to make
7 sure he called her.

8 And a fellow by the name of Bell called and wanted to
9 know if we were open.

10 And ~~Kathy~~/Ray called, and I said, "Definitely not."

11 And I called Ralph Paul, that owns the Bull Pen. He
12 said, "Jack, being as everyone else is open" -- because he
13 knows I was pressed for money -- and I said, "No, Ralph, I
14 can't open."

15 He said, "Okay, if that is why, that is the way it's
16 got to be."

17 So in the meantime, I had gone with Alice Nichols for
18 sometime, and I called her on the phone but she wasn't there,
19 but I left the number on the pay phone for her to return the
20 call, because I didn't want to keep the business phone tied
21 up. And I hadn't spoken to her in maybe nine months or a
22 year. I don't know what I said to her, not many words, but
23 just what happened.

24 I still remained around the Club there. I am sure I
25 was crying pretty bad. I think I made a long distance call

1 to California. This fellow had just visited me, and I had
2 known him in the days back in Chicago when we were very young,
3 in the real tough part of Chicago. His name is Al Gruber.

4 He was a bad kid in those days, but he is quite
5 reformed. He is married and has a family, and I am sure
6 he makes a very legitimate livelihood at this time.

7 He happened to come through a couple of nights prior
8 to that to try to interest me, or four or five days prior to
9 that, to interest me in a new kind -- you follow the story
10 as I tell it?

11 CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes.

12 MR. RUBY: It is important, very important. It is
13 on a new kind of machine that washes cars. You pay with
14 tokens. It is a new thing. I don't know if it faded out
15 or not. He tried to interest my brother, Sammy, because
16 Sammy sold his Washateria.

17 And my sister was in the hospital when he first came.
18 I am going back a little bit. Sammy didn't go to the
19 hospital, and we needed to sell Sammy about this particular
20 thing, and that is the reason Al Gruber came into the picture,
21 because he came to try to interest my brother Sammy in this
22 new Washateria deal to wash cars.

23 He left and went to California, but before he went
24 to California I promised him my Dachshund dog.

25 When this thing happened, I called him. He said, "Yes,

1 we are just watching on television." And I couldn't carry
2 on more conversation. I said, "Al, I have to hang up."

3 Then I must have called my sister, Eileen, in Chicago.

4 Then a fellow came over to deliver some merchandise
5 I had ordered over the phone, or Andy ordered. And we said,
6 "What is the use of purchasing any merchandise of any kind,
7 we are not interested in business." And I don't recall what
8 I said, but I told him whatever money he received, to keep
9 the change. I am not a philanthropist, but nothing bothered
10 me at the time. I wasn't interested in anything.

11 Then I kept calling my sister, Eva, because she wanted
12 me to come be with her.

13 Eva and I have a very complex personality. Very
14 rarely can I be with her, but on this particular occasion,
15 since she was carrying on so, I felt that I wanted to be with
16 someone that meant something to me. I wanted to be with her.

17 And I kept calling her back, "I will be there." And
18 so on. But I never did get there until a couple of hours
19 later.

20 I finally left the Club. I am sure you gentlemen can
21 brief in all the things that happened before. A kid by the
22 name of Larry up there, I think I told him to send the dog
23 they crated, to find out about the price -- very impulsive
24 about everything.

25 Then I left the Club. And I had been dieting, but

1 I felt I wanted some food. I can't explain it. It would
2 be like getting intoxicated at that particular time. It is
3 amusing, but it is true.

4 I went over to the Ritz Delicatessen a block and a
5 half away. Must have bought out the store, for about ten
6 dollars' worth of delicacies and so on. Went out to my
7 sister's and stayed at her apartment.

8 Oh, I called from the apartment -- my sister knew more
9 of my calls than I did. I remember I think I called -- I
10 can't think of who I called.

11 Anyway, I am sure I made some calls of what had happened
12 there. Somebody will have to piece me together from the
13 time I got to my sister's apartment where I had partaken of
14 the food.

15 Oh yes, I called Andy. This Andy^T Armstrong called
16 me and said, "Don~~Safran~~ wants you to call him."

17 This is rare for this gentleman, because he is a
18 columnist for the Dallas Times Herald, because he never could
19 get out any copy for my Club. And he said, "Don Safran
20 wants me to call him."

21 I called him, and he said, "Jack, are you going to be
22 closed tonight?"

23 I said, "Yes."

24 He said, "Well, the Cabana and the Adolphus, the Century
25 Room, are going to be closed."

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1 I said, "Don, I am not asking you about any Clubs th
2 are going to be closed. I know I am going to be closed."

3 And he said, "Jack, that is what I want to know."

4 And I said, "You don't have to prompt me about who
5 else is going to be closed."

6 I put the receiver down and talked to my sister, and
7 I said, "Eva, what shall we do?"

8 And she said, "Jack, let's close for the three days.
9 She said, "We don't have anything anyway, but we owe it to
10 (chokes up).

11 So I called Don Safran back immediately and I said,
12 "Don, we decided to close for Friday, Saturday and Sunday."

13 And he said, "Okay."

14 Then I called the Morning News and I wanted to
15 definitely make sure to change a copy of my ad to "Closed
16 Friday, Saturday and Sunday", something to that effect.

17 And it was a little late in the afternoon, but he said
18 "We will try to get the copy in."

19 Then I called Don back again but couldn't get him, ar
20 I spoke to one of his assistants, and I said, I forget what
21 I told him. Anyway, that is one of the calls I had that
22 had transpired.

23 I lie down and take a nap. I wake about 7:00 or
24 7:30. In the meantime, I think I called -- the reason this
25 comes back to me, I know I was going to go to the Synagogue.

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1 I called Coleman Jacobson and asked him what time
2 services are tonight, and he said he didn't know.

3 And I said, "Are there going to be any special service
4 And he said he didn't know of any.

5 And I called the Congregation Shearith Israel and asked
6 the girl, and she said, "Regular services at 8:00 o'clock."

7 And I said, "Aren't there going to be earlier service
8 like 5:30 or 6:00?"

9 And about 7:30 I went to my apartment. I don't know
10 if I went downtown to the Club. I know I went to my apart-
11 ment -- either to the Club or to the apartment.

12 And I changed, showered and shaved, and I think I
13 drove -- and as I drove down, there is a certain Thornton
14 Freeway, and I saw the Clubs were still open going full blast
15 a couple of clubs there.

16 Anyway, I went out to the Synagogue and I went through
17 the line and I spoke to Rabbi Silverman, and I thanked him
18 for going to visit my sister at the hospital. She was in
19 week prior and had just gotten out. I don't remember the
20 date.

21 Then he had a Confirmation -- this is the night prior
22 to the Confirmation. They serve little delicacies. So in
23 spite of the fact of the mood I was in, I strolled into the
24 place, and I think I had a little glass of punch. Nothing
25 intoxicating, just a little punch they serve there. I did

1 speak to anyone. One girl, Leona, said "Hello, Jack", and
2 I wasn't in a conversational mood whatsoever.

3 I left the Club -- I left the Synagogue and I drove by
4 the Bali-Hai Restaurant. I noticed they were open. I took
5 recognition of that.

6 I drove by another Club called the Gay Nineties, and
7 they were closed.

8 And I made it my business to drive down Preston Road.
9 In my mind suddenly it mulled over me that the Police Depart-
10 ment was working overtime. And this is the craziest thing
11 that ever happened in a person's life. I have always been
12 very close to the Police Department, I don't know why.

13 I felt I have always abided by the law -- a few little
14 infractions, but not serious -- and I felt we have one of
15 the greatest Police forces in the world here, and I have
16 always been close to them, and I visited in the office.

17 And over the radio I heard they were working overtime.

18 I stopped at the delicatessen called Phil's on Oak
19 Lawn Avenue, and suddenly I decided -- I told the clerk there
20 I wanted him to make me some real good sandwiches, about ten
21 or twelve, and he had already started on the sandwiches and
22 I got on the phone.

23 I called an officer by the name of Sims and I said,
24 "Sims, I hear you guys are working," and so on. I said,
25 "I want to bring some sandwiches."