

Witnesses Recall Oswald's Firing at a Rifle Range Near Dallas

By FRED POWLEDGE

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DALLAS, Dec. 9.—Half a dozen persons recall seeing Lee H. Oswald practice marksmanship at a suburban rifle range before President Kennedy was assassinated, the operator of the range said today.

Floyd Davis, who opened the range in Grand Prairie six weeks ago, said he himself had not seen the accused assassin.

But four people have told me personally that they saw him, he said, "and two others told a friend of mine that they saw him."

They recalled the 24-year-old man's firing on the range on at least two occasions within three weeks of the President's visit to Dallas on Nov. 22.

Two of the customers, Malcolm Howard Price and Garland C. Slack, have said publicly they are sure they saw Oswald at Mr. Davis' Sportsdrome range. "I'd know that face anywhere," said Mr. Slack. The names of the other witnesses have not been disclosed.

A significant point, according to observers here, is that Oswald was not among the customers' names after the assassination, but before speculation started as to where, if anywhere, Oswald had practiced with his rifle.

Mr. Davis said Mr. Slack came to the rifle range on Nov. 24, the day Oswald was slain in the Dallas police station, and told him that he remembered Oswald.

The operator said Mr. Slack and the other customers did not notify the Federal Bureau of Investigation until it became known that investigators were looking for sites where Oswald might have practiced.

Mr. Price said today that he, too, had recognized Oswald as a frequent user of the rifle range on Nov. 24, he witnessed the young man's death on his television set.

Mr. Price, who helps to operate the range from time to time, recalled that Oswald visited the

range first in early November, around the weekend of Nov. 9-10.

The 34-year-old machinist said he had looked through Oswald's telescopic sight and had been impressed with its clarity.

Mr. Price declined to answer further questions because, he said, the F.B.I. had asked him not to talk. The F.B.I. here denied this.

"I wasn't quite sure the first time I saw him," he said, "but the second time they had that jacket and I knew it was the same man; I felt terrible."

Mr. Davis said the man believed to be Oswald angered other customers on Nov. 17 by his crossfire.

Oswald was believed to have occupied booth No. 8, a wooden frame cubicle with a counter and sandbag to support a shooter's arm. He was firing at target No. 8, 100 yards away across a grassy plain.

Shooters on both sides of Oswald, in booths 7 and 9, complained that someone was firing at their targets.

"I was running a turkey shoot nearby," Mr. Davis said, "and I didn't have time to come over and find out who was cross-firing; I just yelled over for them to stop."

Mr. Slack was in booth No. 9 that day, he continued. "I remember that Mr. Slack was complaining that someone was shooting into his target—and they were hitting the bulls-eye every time."

Carried Three Rifles
Mr. Davis said the customer in No. 7, who had not returned to the range, was a bearded man, well over 6 feet tall, weighed about 250 pounds, wore a red polo shirt and carried three rifles and an expensive scope for zeroing-in his weapons.

"I bet if he could be found he'd remember Oswald, too," Mr. Davis said, "because Oswald, or whoever it was, was shooting into his target, too."

The customers recalled that on the first visit the man resembling Oswald came alone in a battered automobile. On the second visit, they said, he came with another man.

Mrs. Michael R. Paine of Irving, in whose home Oswald's wife lived for a formed authorities that her husband had told her of his taking part in the shooting.

The Dallas Morning News said this week that the police had doubled a version of the shooting given them by a 15-year-old neighbor of Mr. Walker's. This version is the only one made public so far.

Tells of Seeing 2 Flee
The boy, Kirk Coleman, said he ran into Mr. Walker's backyard after the shooting and saw two men flee in two cars.

One of the men, he said, carried an object that looked like a rifle. The boy said the man whom he described as resembling Oswald, thrust the object into the back seat of his car. He said the first man, driving a 1950 car, left a moment before.

A check of Mr. Walker's other neighbors showed today that none had witnessed the shooting or the snipers' departure. One neighbor said she had been watching television that night, had heard what might have been a rifle shot, but had thought nothing of it.

The Dallas Morning News meantime reported in a story prepared for tomorrow morning's edition that a fourth cartridge had been found in Oswald's rifle on the day of the assassination.

In another development, the police recalled that a man bearing a pro-Castro placard was chased from a Dallas street corner last April.

The Dallas Times Herald said today that the police had been tipped off by a newspaperman that a man "was standing on a main St. corner, wearing a placard including the phrase 'Viva Fidel,' passing out literature."

The newspaper said that a policeman was sent to the corner, and that the demonstrator then fled.

This jibes with a letter, undated but written about that time, from Oswald to the National Fair Play for Cuba headquarters in New York. The letter apparently the first of six Oswald sent the pro-Castro organization during the summer, said:

"Since I am unemployed, I stood yesterday for the first time in my life, with a placard around my neck, passing out fair play for Cuba pamphlets, etc. I was cursed as well as praised by some. My home-made placard said 'Hands Off Cuba, Viva Fidel.'"