

What Jack Ruby Told to Warren

SECOND exclusive installment of Jack Ruby's testimony to the Warren Commission starts on Page A-16.

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Shortly before noon on Sunday, June 7, Earl Warren, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, sat down opposite Jack Ruby, the convicted killer of Lee Harvey Oswald, the man accused of assassinating President Kennedy.

For the next three hours and five minutes, the august and distinguished chief justice and the little guy from Chicago's slums — the little guy who never made it — talked about what happened that terrible weekend of last Nov. 22.

The weekend that started with the murder of the President on Friday and ended 48 hours later with

Ruby firing a bullet into Oswald's abdomen in the basement of the Dallas city jail.

From sources close to the Warren Commission in Washington, I obtained the transcript of what was said last June 7, in a neat but clinically cold interrogation room of the Dallas county jail.

It is a fascinating document — fascinating for what it leaves unsaid, as well as for what it says.

Fifteen persons — including Ruby and Warren — were present in the interrogation room when Ruby began his recital. But eventually it was Jack Ruby who dominated.

He was told to tell his story, and he did, in thousands of words and hundreds of sentences, some of which rambled on to the point of being without sense.

But in the end, Jack Ruby told much about himself that day.

He opened the floodgates of his mind and a stream of consciousness that would have dazzled a James Joyce buff and enraptured a psychiatrist.

SMALL MAN, LARGE EGO

Jack Ruby bared to the

chief justice his emotions, his fears, his triumphs and his ego — a large ego for such a small man.

And what of those who listened to him?

I read the transcript three times in one sitting. And it seemed to me that the chief justice and the Warren Commission's general counsel, J. Lee Rankin, were acutely aware of the talk both here and in Europe that President Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy.

They took pains to prove to themselves and the world that no conspiracy existed. So perhaps the most important question contained in the 102-page transcript is this:

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN:

May I ask you this question, and this is one of the questions we came here to ask you. Did you know Lee Harvey Oswald prior to this shooting?

RUBY: That is why I want to take the lie detector test. Just saying no isn't sufficient.

STICKS TO POINT

Through his entire testimony Jack Ruby stuck to one theme: He had shot Oswald because he didn't want Mrs. Kennedy, the President's widow to be forced into the ordeal of testifying at the accused assassin's trial.

"I was never malicious toward this person (Oswald)," Ruby told the chief justice at one point. "No one else requested me to do anything.

"I never spoke to anyone about attempting to do

anything," he continued. "No subversive organization gave me any idea. No underworld person made any effort to contact me. It all happened that Sunday morning."

The hint of conspiracy was very much in the air again when Mr. Rankin asked Ruby if he knew officer J. D. Tippit, the policeman allegedly shot and killed by Oswald some 45 minutes after the assassination.

"I knew there was three Tippits on the force," Ruby replied. "The only one I knew used to work for the Special Services, and I am certain this wasn't the Tippit, this wasn't the man."

PUZZLING STATEMENT

So Jack Ruby swears he didn't know officer J. D. Tippit. And this is rather strange. Because according to the Dallas police, Ruby knew every cop on the force.

Didn't Dallas authorities explain that it was because Ruby was so well known within the department that he was able to get so close to Oswald that Sunday morning? Didn't Dallas authorities explain that no policeman would think of questioning the presence of good old Jack Ruby?

Yet, Officer J. D. Tippit was a complete stranger to the man who prided himself on his close association with the Dallas police.

Despite Ruby's statement that he wasn't acquainted with Tippit, Rankin pressed on.

"There was a story."

Rankin told Ruby, "that you were seen sitting in your Carousel Club with Mr. (Bernard) Weisman, officer Tippit, and another man who has been called a rich oil man, at one time shortly before the assassination. Can you tell us anything about that?"

WHO WAS IT?

Ruby answered the question with a question of his

own:

"Who was the rich oil man?"

MR. RANKIN: Can you remember? We haven't been told. We are just trying to find out anything that you know about him.

RUBY: I am the one that made such a big issue of Bernard Weissman's ad. (The ad, extremely critical of President Kennedy, appeared in a Dallas newspaper the day of the assassination.) Maybe you do things to cover up, if you are capable of doing it.

Ruby then launched into an account of visiting a Dallas club Saturday afternoon. But Rankin and Warren pressed him about reports of the meeting.

QUERIES WARREN

"How many days prior to the assassination was that?" Ruby asked.

"My recollection is that it was a week or two," the chief justice replied.

"Did anyone have any knowledge that their beloved President was going to visit here prior to that time, or what is the definite time that they knew he was coming to Dallas?" Ruby countered.

"Well, I don't know just what those dates are," Warren replied.

"I see," said Ruby. And at that point it almost appeared as if Ruby and Warren had changed places — that Ruby was the interrogator and the chief justice his witness.

UNAWED BY WARREN

Ruby then skipped on to his life in Chicago. And while he never admitted that the reported meeting took place, he never directly denied it either.

If you get the impression from reading the transcript that Ruby wasn't the least bit awed by the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, you are absolutely right.

About a third of the way through his testimony, the striptease impresario turned to the chief justice and asked:

"Is there any way of you getting me to Washington?"

One can almost picture the look of surprise and consternation that passed across Warren's face. For he said, quite simply: "I beg your pardon?"

DOMINATED BY RUBY

At another point Ruby

asked Warren if he knew a local disc jockey. "I think I do not," the chief justice replied rather coolly.

Yes, indeed, Jack Ruby dominated.

Dominated to the point where he engaged in an argument with Joe Tonahill, one of his defense lawyers.

"You are lying, Joe Tonahill," Ruby accused. "You are lying."

Dominated to the point where Sheriff Bill Decker and the other law enforcement officers left the room so that

Ruby would continue with his story.

Dominated to the point that Warren promised Ruby he would have a lie detector test. And the chief justice made good on his promise. The test was administered last month.

Yet there was a great deal of fear inside Jack Ruby that Sunday in June. He feared for his own life; he feared for the lives of his brothers and sisters.

"When you leave here,"

Ruby told Warren at one point, "I am finished. My family is finished."

And then, in perhaps his strangest statement of all,

Ruby, who had finally achieved the notoriety he always longed for, said:

"You have a lost cause, Earl Warren. You don't stand a chance. They feel about you like they do about me, Chief Justice Warren."

But perhaps that statement wasn't so strange after

all. What Jack Ruby had done was to put himself in the same boat as the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Not bad for a little tough guy from Chicago's slums.

Here is the second installment of the transcript of the testimony given by Jack Ruby to Chief Justice Warren and his commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy.

A third and final por-

tion of the transcript will appear in The Herald-Examiner tomorrow.

The full report of the Warren Commission will not be made public until next month.

CONFIDENTIAL

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 and Houston Streets, Dallas, Texas.

RUBY: I went to the building of the Times Herald, I went to the Times Herald — may I read that, Joe? May I please?

MR. TONAHILL: Sam ever get your glasses?

RUBY: Not yet. (Reading) "This is the girl that" — what? — "that started Jack off." What is this other word?

MR. TONAHILL: Culminated?

RUBY: That is untrue. That is what I wanted to read. (throwing pad on table.) Gentlemen, unless you get me to Washington, you can't get a fair shake out of me. If you understand my way of talking, you have got to bring me to Washington to get the tests. Do I sound dramatic? Off the beam?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, you are speaking very, very rational, and I am really surprised that you can remember as much as you have remembered up to the present time. You have given it to us in detail.

I Am Not

A Crackpot

RUBY: Unless you can get me to Washington, and I am not a crackpot, I have all my sense — I don't want to evade any crime I am guilty of. But Mr. Moore, have I spoken this way when we have talked?

MR. MOORE: Yes.

RUBY: Unless you get me

Ruby Retraces Muddled Death Path

to Washington immediately. I am afraid after what Mr. Tonahill has written there, which is unfair to me regarding my testimony here — you all want to hear what he wrote?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes, you might read it. If you need glasses again, try mine this time (handing glasses to Ruby.)

RUBY: (Putting on glasses) "This is the gun —"

MR. TONAHILL: "Thing," isn't it?

RUBY: "This is the thing that started Jack on the shooting."

MR. TONAHILL: Kathy Kay was talking about Oswald.

RUBY: You are lying Joe Tonahill. You are lying.

MR. TONAHILL: No, I am not.

RUBY: You are lying, because you know what motivated me. You want to make it that it was a premeditation.

MR. TONAHILL: No.

RUBY: Yes, you do.

'Go Ahead, Tell It Your Way'

MR. TONAHILL: I don't think there was any premeditation, but you go ahead and tell it your way. That is what we want you to do. That is what the Chief Justice wants.

RUBY: Not when you specify this. You are Senator Rankin?

MR. RANKIN: No, I am the general counsel for our commission, Mr. Ruby.

MR. TONAHILL: You go on and keep telling it down to Caroline and the truth.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Mr. Ruby, may I suggest this, that if we are to have any tests, either a lie detector or, as you suggest, maybe a truth serum, I don't know anything about truth serum, but if we are to have it, we have to have something to check against, and we would like to have the rest of your story

as you started to tell us, because you are now getting down to the crucial part of it, and it wouldn't be fair to you to have this much of it and then not have the rest.

RUBY: Because the reason why, Joe knows from the time that I told attorney (Melvin) Belli, and the

story I wanted to tell on the stand, and Mr. Tonahill knows this isn't the time. The thought never entered my mind. He knows it.

MR. TONAHILL: I didn't say the thought entered your mind. I didn't say that.

RUBY: You are inferring that.

MR. TONAHILL: Unconsciously, maybe, is what I meant to say.

RUBY: Why go back to Friday, Joe?

MR. TONAHILL: You are going to come right down—

RUBY: Why go back to Friday? That set me off. Then it is greater premeditation than you know is true.

MR. TONAHILL: I don't say it is premeditation. I never have. I don't think it is.

RUBY: Because it never entered my mind when we talked about, the officer, cutting him to bits. You would like to have built it up for my defense, but that is not it. I am here to tell the truth.

Psychiatrist

Said Ruby Did

MR. TONAHILL: The psychiatrist said that to me.

RUBY: You want to put that into my thoughts, but it never happened. I took it with a grain of salt what he said at that particular time. Well, it is too bad, Chief Warren, that you didn't get me to your headquarters six months ago.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Well, Mr. Ruby, I will tell you why we didn't. Because you were then about to be tried and I didn't

want to do anything that would prejudice you in your trial. And for that reason, I wouldn't even consider asking you to testify until the trial was over.

That is the only reason that we didn't talk to you sooner. And I wish we had gotten here a little sooner after your trial was over, but I know you had other things on your mind, and we had other work, and it got to this late date. But I assure you, there is no desire on our part to let this matter go to any late date for any ulterior purpose. I assure you that. And as I told you at the beginning, if you want a test of some kind made, I will undertake to see that it is done.

RUBY: You have power to do it. Me getting the tests?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes, I do.

RUBY: How soon can it be done?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Well, I am not familiar with these things, but we will try to do it expedi-

tiously, you may be sure, because we are trying to wind up the work of this commission. And I assure you we won't delay it.

RUBY: Are you staying overnight here, Chief Warren?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, I have to be back, because we have an early session of the court tomorrow morning.

Police Offer To Go Out

RUBY: Is there any way of getting a polygraph here?

SHERIFF DECKER: May I make a suggestion? Jack, listen, you and I have had

a lot of dealings. Do you want my officers removed from the room while you talk to this commission?

RUBY: That wouldn't prove any truth.

SHERIFF DECKER:

These people came several thousand miles to interview you. You have wanted to tell me your story and I have refused to let you tell me. Now be a man with a bunch of men that have come a long way to give you an opportunity to. You asked me for permission to ask me for permission to tell your story, and I told you "No." This is a supreme investigating committee at this particular time. Now give them your story and be a man, if you want them to deal with you and deal fairly with you.

RUBY: It is unfair to me unless I get all the facilities to back up what I say.

SHERIFF DECKER: You tell him your story. Nobody is denying it. You tell this man, he has come a thousand or more miles to listen to you. Now be a man about it.

Test Called Impractical

MR. MOORE: What I suggest: Jack at one time I was a polygraph operator, and you would not be able to go through the entire story that way you have here. So seriously, you should tell the story and the things you want checked, you can be asked directly. Because you can only answer yes or no on the polygraph examination. So I think in view of what you want, you should tell your story first, and then the points that you want verified, you can be questioned on.

As the sheriff mentioned, the commission, has come a long way to have the opportunity to listen to your story, and I am sure that they know you are telling the truth, in any case.

RUBY: I wish the President were right here now. It is a terrible ordeal I tell you that.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I am sure it is an ordeal for you, and we want to make it just as easy as we can. That is the reason that we have let you tell your story in your own way without being interrupted. If you will just proceed with the rest of your state-

ment I think it would make it a lot easier for us to verify it in the way that you want it to be done.

RUBY: I don't know how to answer you.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Well, you have told us most of what happened up to the time of the incident, and you are almost within, you are just within a few hours of it now.

RUBY: There is a Saturday.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Beg your pardon?

RUBY: There is a Saturday night. There is a Friday night. This is still only Friday night, chief.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes, that is true.

RUBY: Well, I will go into a certain point, and if I stop, you will have to understand if I stop to get my bearings together.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes.

RUBY: I am in the Times Herald Building. I go upstairs, naturally.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: This is about what time?

RUBY: This is, I imagine, is—I left KLF at 2:00 a.m. and I spent an hour with the officer and his girl friend so it must have been about 3:15 approximately. No, it wasn't. When you are not concerned with time, it could have been 4:00 o'clock.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: It doesn't make any difference.

Gay Time Even So

RUBY: Forty-five minutes difference. I am up there in the composing room talking to a guy by the name of Pat Gayloesch. He was so elated that I bought him this twist board, and I had it sealed in a polyethylene bag, but he wanted to see how it is demonstrated. How it was worked. It is a board that is on a pivot, a ball bearing, and it has a tendency to give you certain exercises in twisting your body. So not that I wanted to get in with the hilarity of frolicking, but he asked me to show him, and the other men gathered around.

When you get into the movement of a ball bearing disk, your body is free to

move. I know you look like you are having a gay time, because naturally if your body is so free of moving, it is going to look that way.

I am stating this in that even with my emotional feeling for our beloved President, even to demonstrate the twist board, I did it because someone asked me to. You follow me, gentlemen, as I describe it?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes, I do.

RUBY: Then we placed the ad in, and if I recall, I requested Pat to put a black border around to show that the ad was in mourning, or something, because we were, everything was in mourning. Bill, will you do that for me that you asked a minute ago? You said you wanted to leave the room.

SHERIFF DECKER: I will have everyone leave the room, including myself if you want to talk about it. You name it, and out we go.

RUBY: All right.

SHERIFF DECKER: You want all of us outside?

RUBY: Yes.

SHERIFF DECKER: I will leave Tonahill and Moore. I am not going to have Joe leave.

RUBY: If you are not going to have Joe leave.

SHERIFF DECKER: Moore, his body is responsible to you. His body is responsible to you.

RUBY: Bill, I am not accomplishing anything if they are here, and Joe Tonahill is here. You asked me anybody I wanted out.

SHERIFF DECKER: Jack, this is your attorney. That is your lawyer.

RUBY: He is not my lawyer.

(Sheriff Decker and law enforcement officers left room.)

'Do I Sound Sober Enough?'

Gentlemen, if you want to hear any further testimony, you will have to get me to Washington soon, because it has something to do with you, Chief Warren. Do I sound sober enough to tell you this?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes, go right ahead.

RUBY: I want to tell the truth, and I can't tell

List of Those Present

Those present at the interrogation were:

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 Jawroski, 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

it here. I can't tell it here.
Does that make sense to you?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Well, let's don't talk about sense. But I really can't see why you can't tell this commission.

RUBY: What is your name?

MR. BALL: Joe Ball.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Mr. Joe Ball. He is an attorney from Los Angeles who has been working for me.

RUBY: Do you know Belli too?

MR. BALL: I know of him.

RUBY: Ball was working with him. He knows Belli. You know Melvin Belli?

MR. BALL: I was not acquainted with him.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No association of any kind.

MR. BALL: We practice in different cities.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Five hundred miles away. Mr. Ball practices in Long Beach, and Mr. Belli practices in San Francisco.

There is positively no connection between anybody in this room, as far as I know, with Mr. Belli. I can assure you of that.

RUBY: Where do you stand, Moore?

MR. MOORE: Well, I am assigned to the commission, Jack.

'I Am in a Tough Spot'

RUBY: The President assigned you?

MR. MOORE: No, my chief did. And I am not involved in the investigation. I am more of a security officer.

RUBY: Boys, I am in a

tough spot, I tell you that.

MR. MOORE: You recall when I talked to you, there were certain things I asked you not tell me at the time, for certain reasons, that you were probably going to trial at that time, and I respected your position on that and asked you not to tell me certain things.

RUBY: But this isn't the place for me to tell what I want to tell.

MR. MOORE: The commission is looking into the entire matter, and you are part of it, should be.

RUBY: Chief Warren, your life is in danger in this city, do you know that?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, I don't know that.

If that is the thing that you don't want to talk about, you can tell me, if you wish, when this is all over, just between you and me.

RUBY: No, I would like to talk to you in private.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: You may do that when you finish your story. You may tell me that phase of it.

RUBY: I bet you haven't had a witness like me in your whole investigation, is that correct?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: There are many witnesses whose memory has

not been as good as yours. I tell you that honestly.

RUBY: My reluctance to talk—you haven't had any witnesses in telling the story, in finding so many problems?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: You have a greater problem than any witness we have had.

RUBY: I have a lot of

reasons for having those problems.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I know that, and we want to respect your rights, whatever they may be. And I only want to hear what you are willing to tell us, because I realize that you still have a great problem before you, and I am not trying to press you.

I came here because I thought you wanted to tell us that story, and I think the story should be told for the public, and it will eventually be made public. If you want to do that, you are entitled to do that, and if you want to have it verified as the thing can be verified by a polygraph test, you may have that too. I will undertake to do that for you, but at all events we must first have the story that we are going to check it against.

RUBY: When are you going back to Washington?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I am going back very shortly, after we finish this hearing. I am going to have some lunch.

RUBY: Can I make a statement?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes.

RUBY: If you request me to go back to Washington with you right now, that couldn't be done, could it?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, it could not be done. It could not be done. There are a good many things involved in that, Mr. Ruby.

Warren Gives His Reasons

RUBY: What are they?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Well, the public attention that it would attract, and the people who would be around. We have no place there for you to be safe when we take you out, and we are not law enforcement officers, and it isn't our responsibility to go into anything of that kind. And certainly it couldn't be done on a moment's notice this way.

RUBY: Well, from what I read in the paper, they made certain precautions for you coming here, but you got here.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: There are no precau-

tions taken at all.

RUBY: There were some remarks in the paper about some crackpots.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I don't believe everything I read in the paper.

MR. MOORE: In that respect, the Chief Justice is

in public life. People in public life are well aware they don't please everyone, and they get these threats. Incidentally, if it is the part about George Senator talking about the Earl Warren Society, the Chief Justice is aware of that phase, and I am sure he would like to hear anything that you have to say if it affects the security.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Before you finish the rest of your statement, may I ask you this question, and this is one of the questions we came here to ask you.

Did you know Lee Harvey Oswald prior to this shooting?

RUBY: That is why I want to take the lie detector test, just saying no isn't sufficient.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I will afford you that opportunity. You can't do both of them at one time.

My Life Is In Danger

RUBY: Gentlemen, my life is in danger here. Not with my guilty plea of execution. Do I sound sober enough to you as I say this?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: You do. You sound entirely sober.

RUBY: From the moment I started my testimony, have I sounded as though, with the exception of becoming emotional, have I sounded as though I made sense, what I was speaking about?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: You have indeed. I understood everything you have said. If I haven't, it is my fault.

RUBY: Then I follow this up. I may not live tomorrow to give any further testimony. The reason why I add this, since you assure me that I have been speak-

ing sense by then, I might be speaking sense by following what I have said, and the only thing I want to get out to the public, and I can't say it here is with authenticity, with sincerity of the truth of everything and why my act was committed, but it can't be said here.

If can be said, it's got to be said amongst people of the highest authority that would give me the benefit of doubt. And following that, immediately give me the lie detector test after I do make the statement. Chairman Warren, if you felt that your life was in danger at the moment, how would you feel? Wouldn't you be reluctant to go on speaking, even though you request me to do so?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I think I might have some reluctance if I was in your position, yes, I think I would. I think I would figure out very carefully to whether it would endanger me or not. If you think that

anything that I am doing or anything that I am asking is endangering you in anyway, shape or form. I want you to feel absolutely free to say that the interview is over.

RUBY: What happens then? I didn't accomplish anything.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, nothing has been accomplished.

RUBY: Well, then you won't follow up with anything further?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: There wouldn't be anything to follow up if you hadn't completed your statement.

RUBY: You said you have the power to do what you want to do, is that correct?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Exactly.

RUBY: Without any limitations?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Within the purview of our Executive Order which established the commission. We have the right to take testimony of anyone we want in this whole situation, and we have the right, if we so choose to do it, to verify that statement in any way we wish to do it.

RUBY: But you don't have

a right to take a prisoner back with you when you want to?

'They Weren't Jack Ruby'

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No. We have the power to subpoena witnesses to Washington if we want to do it, but we have taken the testimony of two or three hundred people, I would imagine, here in Dallas without going to Washington.

RUBY: Yes, but those people aren't Jack Ruby.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, they weren't.

RUBY: They weren't.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Now I want you to feel that we are not here to take advantage of you, because I know that you are in a delicate position, and unless you had indicated not only through your lawyers but also through your sister, who wrote a letter addressed either to me or Mr. Rankin, saying that you wanted to testify before the commission, unless she had told us that, I wouldn't have bothered you.

Because I know you do have this case that is not yet finished and I wouldn't jeopardize your position by trying to insist that you testify. So I want you to feel that you are free to refrain from testifying any time you wish. But I will also be frank with you and say that I don't think it would be to your advantage to tell us as much as you have and then to stop and not tell us the rest. I can't see what advantage that would give you.

RUBY: The thing is this that with your power that you have, Chief Justice Warren, and all these gentlemen, too much time has gone by for me to give you any benefit of what I am saying now.

Too Tragic To Talk About

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, that isn't a fact, because until we make our findings on the commission, and until we make our report on the case, it is not too late. And there are other witnesses we

have who are yet to be examined. So from our standpoint, it is timely. We are not handicapped at all by the lateness of your examination.

RUBY: Well, it is too tragic to talk about.

MR. RANKIN: Isn't it true that we waited very late in our proceedings to talk to Mrs. Kennedy?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes, I might say to you that we didn't take Mrs. Kennedy's statement until day before yesterday. Mr. Rankin and I took her testimony then. So we are not

treating you different from any other witness.

RUBY: I tell you, gentlemen, my whole family is in jeopardy. My sisters, as to their lives.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes?

RUBY: Naturally, I am a foregone conclusion. My sisters, Eva, Eileen and Mary, I lost my sisters. My brothers, Sam, Earl, Hyman, and myself naturally—my in-laws, Harold Cominsky, Marge Ruby, the wife of Earl, and Phyllis, the wife of Sam Ruby, they are in jeopardy of loss of their lives. Yet they have just because they are blood related to myself—does that sound serious enough to you, Chief Justice Warren?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Nothing could be more serious if that is the fact. But your sister, I don't know whether it was your sister Eva or your other sister—

Letter Came Long Ago

RUBY: Eileen wrote you a letter.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Wrote the letter to me and told us that you would like to testify, and that is one of the reasons we came down here.

RUBY: But unfortunately when did you get the letter, Chief Justice Warren?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: It was a long time ago. I admit, I think it was, let's see, roughly between two and three months ago.

RUBY: Yes.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I think it was yes.

RUBY: At that time when

you first got the letter and I was begging Joe Tonahill and the other lawyers to know the truth about me, certain things that are happening now wouldn't be happening at this particular time.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Yes?

RUBY: Of why that Sunday morning—that thought never entered my mind prior to that Sunday morning when I took it upon myself to try to be a martyr or some screwball, you might say.

But I felt very emotional and very carried away from Mrs. Kennedy, that with all the strife she had gone through—I had been following it pretty well—that someone owed it to our beloved President that she shouldn't be expected to come back to face trial of this heinous crime.

And I have never had a chance to tell that, to back it up, to prove it. Consequently, right at this moment, I am being victimized as a part of a plot in the world's worst tragedy and crime at this moment.

Months back had I been given a chance—I take that back. Sometime back a police officer of the Dallas police department wanted to know how I got into the building. And I don't know whether I requested a lie detector test or not, but my attorney wasn't available. When you are a defendant in that case, you say "speak to your attorney," you know. But that was a different time. It was after the trial, whenever it happened.

At this moment, Lee Harvey Oswald isn't guilty of committing the crime of assassinating President Kennedy. Jack Ruby is. How can I fight that, Chief Justice Warren?

Birch Society Mentioned

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Well now, I want to say, Mr. Ruby, that as far as this commission is concerned, there is no implication of that in what we are doing.

RUBY: All right, there is a certain organization here—

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: That I can assure you.

RUBY: There is an organization here, Chief Justice Warren, if it take my life at this moment to say it, and Bill Decker said he a man and say it, there is a John Birch Society right now in activity, and (former Maj. Gen.) Edwin Walker is one of the top men of this organization—take it for what it is worth, Chief Justice Warren. Unfortunate for me, for me giving the people the opportunity to get in power, because of the act I committed, has put a lot of people in jeopardy with their lives. Don't register with you, does it?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, I don't understand that.

RUBY: Would you rather I just delete what I said and just pretend that nothing is going on?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I would not indeed, I am only interested in what you want to tell this commission. That is all I am interested in.

RUBY: Well, I said my life, I won't be living long now. I know that. My family's lives will be gone. When I left my apartment that morning...

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: What morning?

RUBY: Sunday morning.
CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Sunday morning.

RUBY: Let's go back. Saturday I watched Rabbi Se-

lecman. Any of you watch it that Saturday morning?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, I didn't happen to hear it.

Came Home To Be Shot

RUBY: He went ahead and eulogized that here is a man that fought in every battle, went to every country, and had to come back to his own country to be shot in the back.

(Starts crying.)

I must be a great actor, I tell you that.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No.

RUBY: That created a tremendous emotional feeling for me, the way he said that. Prior to all the other times, I was carried away. Then that Saturday night, I didn't do anything but

visit a little club over here and had a Coca-Cola, because I was sort of depressed. A fellow that owns the Pogo Club, Bob Norton, and he knew something was wrong with me in the certain mood I was in. And I went home and that weekend, Sunday morning, and

saw a letter to Caroline, two columns about a sixteen-inch area. Someone had written a letter to Caroline. The most heartbreaking letter. I don't remember the contents. Do you remember that?

MR. MOORE: I think I saw it.

RUBY: Yes. And alongside that letter on the same sheet of paper was a small

comment in the newspaper that, I don't know how it was stated, that Mrs. Kennedy may have to come back for the trial of Lee

Harvey Oswald. That caused me to go like I did. That caused me to go like I did.

I don't know, Chief Justice, but I got so carried away and I remember prior to that thought, there has never been another thought in my mind; I was never malicious toward this person. No one else requested me to do anything.

I never spoke to anyone about attempting to do anything. No subversive organization gave me any idea.

No underworld person made any effort to contact me. It all happened that Sunday morning. The last thing I read was that Mrs. Kennedy may have to come back to Dallas for the trial of Lee Harvey Oswald, and I don't know what bug got hold of me. I don't know what it is, but I am going to tell the truth word for word.

I am taking a pill called Preludin. It is a harmless pill, and it is very easy to get in the drug store. It isn't a highly prescribed pill. I use it for dieting. I don't partake of that much food. I think that was a stimulus to give me an emotional feeling that suddenly I felt, which was so stupid, that I wanted to show my love for our faith, being of the Jewish faith, and I never used the term and I

don't want to go into that—suddenly the feeling, the emotional feeling came within me that someone owed this debt to our beloved President to save her the ordeal of coming back.

I don't know why that came through my mind. And I drove past the Main Street, past the County Building, and there was a crowd already gathered there. And I guess I thought I knew he was going to be moved at 10:00 o'clock, I don't know. I listened to the radio; and I passed a crowd and it looked—I am repeating myself—and I took it for granted he had already been moved.

Sent Money To Employee

And I parked my car in the lot across from the Western Union. Prior to that, I got a call from a little girl—she wanted some money—that worked for me, and I said, "Can't you wait till payday?" and she said, "Jack, you are going to be closed." So my purpose was to go to the Western Union—my double purpose—but the thought of doing, committing the act wasn't until I left my apartment. Sending the wire was when I had the phone call—or the money order.

I drove down Main Street—there was a little incident I left out, that I started to go down a driveway, but I wanted to go by Reed's and I saw him and started to cry again. Then I drove, parked the car across from the Western Union, sent the money order, whatever it was, walked the distance from the Western Union to the ramp—I didn't sneak in. I didn't linger in there.

I didn't crouch or hide behind anyone, unless the television camera can make it seem that way. There was an officer talking—I don't know what rank he had—talking to a Sam Pease in a car parked up on the curb.

I walked down those few steps, and there was the person that—I wouldn't say I saw her—it was a feeling I had for our beloved President and Mrs. Kennedy, that he was insignificant to what my purpose was.

And when I walked down the ramp—I would say there was an eight-foot clearance not that I wanted to be a hero, or I didn't realize that even if the officer would have observed me, the Kleig lights, but I can't take that.

What Was Actual Time?

I did not mingle with the crowd. There was no one near me when I walked down the ramp, because if you will time the time I

sent the money order, I think it was 10:17 a.m. Sunday morning.

I think the actual act was committed—I take that back—was it 11:00 o'clock? You should know this.

MR. MOORE: 11:21.

RUBY: No, when Oswald was shot.

And I have a friend of mine—do you mind if it is a slipshod story?

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No, you tell us in your own way.

RUBY: A fellow whom I sort of idolized is of the Catholic faith and a gambler. Naturally in my business you meet people of various backgrounds. And the thought came, we were very close, and I always thought a lot of him, and I knew that Kennedy, being Catholic, I knew how heartbroken he was, and even his picture of this Mr. McWillie flashed across me, because I have a great fondness for him.

All that blended into the thing that, like a screwball, the way it turned out, that I thought I would sacrifice myself for the few moments of saving Mrs. Kennedy the discomfiture of coming back to trial. Now all these things of my background, I should have been the last person in the world to want to be a martyr. It happens, doesn't it, Chief Warren?

I mean, for instance, I have been in the night club business, a burlesque. It

was a means of livelihood. I knew persons of notorious backgrounds years ago in Chicago. I was with the union back in Chicago, and I left the union when I found out the notorious organization had moved in there. It was in 1940.

Then, recently, I had to make so many numerous calls that I am sure you know of. Am I right? Because of this, I am in a position in my business. My unfair competition had been running certain shows that we were restricted to run by

regulation of the union.

Union Rules Get Blame

But they violated all the rules of the union, and I didn't violate it, and consequently I was becoming insolvent because of it. All those calls were made with only in relation to seeing if they can help out, with the American Guild of Variety Artists. Does that confirm a lot of things you have heard? Every person I have called, and sometimes you may not even know a person intimately, you sort of tell them, well, you are stranded down here and you want some help—if they know of any official of the American Guild of Variety Artists to help me. Because my competitors were putting me out of business.

I even flew to New York to see Joe Glazer, and he called Bobby Faye. He was the national president. That didn't help. He called Barney Ross and Joey Adams. All these phone calls were related not in any way involved with the underworld, because I have been away from Chicago 17 years down in Dallas. As a matter of fact, I even called a Mr.—hold it before I say it—headed the American Federation of Labor. I can't think—in the state of Texas—Miller.

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: I don't know.

RUBY: Is there a Deutsch I. Maylor? I called a Mr. Maylor here in Texas to see if he could help me. I want to set you gentlemen straight on all the tele-

phone calls I had. This was a long time prior to what has happened. And the only association I had with those calls, the only questions that I inquired about, was if they could help me with the American Guild of Variety Artists, to see that they abolished it, because it was unfair to professional talent, abolish them from putting on their shows in Dallas.

That is the only reason I made those calls. Where do we go from there?

(THIS TRANSCRIPT
WILL BE CONCLUDED TO-
MORROW.)

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