

This is the fifth installment of the story of Jack Ruby as told in his jail cell in Dallas where he awaits trial for killing Lee Oswald. It was taped and transcribed by William R. Woodfield, author of "Ninth Life," a biography of Caryl Chessman.

## #5 By Jack Ruby With William R. Woodfield

I WANTED TO DO something kind. Money had no value. My whole world was gone. I just wanted to do something to help someone.

I went to the police station and parked in the lot. I left Shoba (the dog) and the sandwiches in the car. I was looking for Joe Deland of KLIF-TV. He could tell me how to get through to Gordon McLendon. A police officer asked me where I was going and I told him.

As I walked through the halls, fellows kept saying, "Hello Jack," "Hi Jack." I didn't feel so lost. Being with a crowd and being known kind of took the mourning feeling away. I took the elevator upstairs. There were a lot of officers who knew me and who said hello to me. But no one was sad in the City Hall. (He actually means the police station. They are next door to each other, and few people think of them as separate entities.) There was no crying, no tears.

Saturday, Nov. 23, 1963, midnight: I asked a police officer friend to page Joe Deland for me, but we couldn't find him. Suddenly Chief Curry (Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry) and Homicide Captain Will Fritz appeared with Oswald.

I was suddenly in a swarm of people. I lost my purpose in going there. I'm in a world of history.

The reporters and television men started complaining to Chief Curry about the hallway being too crowded. They protested that they needed more room, so Oswald was taken out. He was mumbling. I didn't think much of him. He looked like a creep. But he didn't look like he could have killed our President all alone.

About 1 a.m.: Chief Curry took us to the basement to the assembly room—a large room. I got up on a table in a corner so that I would be out of the way and could see everything. Capt. Fritz and Henry Wade, the Dallas County District Attorney (a friend of Jack Ruby's who, ironically, is now in charge of prosecuting Ruby) brought Oswald out into view of the television cameras and the photographers.

They took their pictures and the reporters asked Oswald questions. He was mumbling answers. When everyone had his

pictures they took him away.

I had my gun in my pocket this night. I was just a few feet from the deceased (Ruby often refers to Lee Oswald as "the deceased" and "that person"). I had no thought of killing him. It never entered my head. Besides, he was still only a suspect—innocent until proved guilty.

"We have enough evidence to convict," I heard my friend, Henry Wade, announce to the hundreds of reporters and television men. Henry also announced that the deceased (Oswald) had refused to take a lie detector test. Wade also told us that Oswald had denied being a Communist, but admitted being a Marxist and having defected to Russia.

Chief Curry confirmed that the evidence was "conclusive," and someone said that fingerprints had been found. Everyone seemed convinced that the fingerprints belonged to Oswald.

or, at least, that was the impression I got.

Henry Wade told us that he would "ask for and get the death penalty." I heard someone ask Henry how many men he had personally sent to the electric chair. He said, "23 out of 24."

I thought to myself, "Good work, Henry. I'm sure glad you're handling the case." I felt proud that Henry Wade was my friend, and I slipped a Carousel guest card into Henry's pocket and patted him on the back.

The early morning hours: Henry gave a statement to the press, and he referred to the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee," the pro-Castro organization to which Oswald belonged, as the "Free Play for Cuba Com-

mittee." I said, "No, Henry. It's 'Fair Play for Cuba.'" I knew because I had heard it on the radio.

A KBOX-TV man passed by and I asked him for the KLIF-TV number. He gave it to me. I still couldn't understand why there was no feeling of sadness there. There was a lot of talk about how Henry Wade would "try" the deceased. I asked someone why Oswald did it. Someone else said, "He's a nut! That's why!"

I called KLIF-TV. I talked to my friend Ken and told him about the sandwiches. He asked me what was happening, and I told him what Wade had said. He asked me if I could get Henry to the telephone. I said, "Sure," and called Henry and put the phone into his hand. Ken later told me it was a great interview but I missed it.

I wandered off and ran into Russ Knight, a KLIF disk jockey. I had a message for him. I then took Russ downstairs and arranged another interview with him and Henry. I prompted Russ to ask Henry if Oswald was insane. Henry grinned and said not likely.

He admitted that psychiatrists hadn't examined Oswald, but if there was the slightest possibility that he were insane, Henry wouldn't have been so sure he would get electrocuted. He would have waited until after finding out if he were sane or insane before announcing what penalty Oswald should get.

Now that I think about it, I remember hearing Henry held a press conference just a little while after I shot the person. Henry said he wanted to electrocute me, and a doctor hadn't looked at me, either.

I never at any time thought of shooting him. I thought he would get to trial. I did not think he would get shot. I did not tell Capt. Will Fritz — as he now claims I did — that I would shoot Oswald. If I had said such a thing to a police captain, would he have allowed me to stay in the police station with a gun in my pocket? It's ridicu-

lous. I can't imagine why Will Fritz would lie. It only makes him look foolish.

I left City Hall and went for coffee. The Weissman ad came up again. Someone said, "Don't worry, The Dallas Morning News is suffering plenty. People are calling from all over canceling ads."

About 4 a.m.: I went home and talked to George Senator (a friend who shares a two-bedroom apartment with Ruby) about the murder of our President. Again the Weissman ad came up, and suddenly I remembered seeing a sign that said "Impeach Earl Warren," and I felt there was a similarity between the ad insulting the President and the "Impeach Earl Warren" sign. (Ruby begins to cry as he tells this).

I felt I had to do something about it. I decided to photograph the sign that said "Impeach Earl Warren." I thought I would give KLIF-TV the picture. I called the club and asked Larry (an employee) if he would be in front with the Polaroid camera and take a picture for me. George and I drove to Ross and the Expressway and found the sign. It was about 2 feet by 4 feet and like an American flag. It said:

"Impeach Earl Warren

Post Office Box 1757, Beltham, Mass."

Larry took three Polaroid pictures of the billboards and I noticed that the Post Office box number was similar to the box number in the Weissman ad — Post Office Box 1757 on the "Impeach Earl Warren" sign and Post Office Box 1792 on the Weissman ad. I decided to go to the Dallas Post Office and find out who this Weissman was.

Frankly, I suspected it was a gentile using a Jewish name to get us in trouble. I couldn't imagine a Jew doing this. It was the worst possible thing for the Jews. I said to George, "This is the work of either the John Birch Society or the Communists — one or the other."

About 4:30 a.m.: I rang the night bell at the Post Office and told the man on duty I wanted to see Weissman's box — 1792. He showed it to me. It was stuffed full of mail. I asked the Post Office man who Weissman was. He said he didn't know. I asked him if he would give me Weissman's address. He said he couldn't.

I was intense and highly nervous. We left the Dallas Post Office. We went to the Southland Hotel coffee shop. I had some

coffee. I couldn't understand what had happened to the world. I had to find out why those things happen. Who would take out such an act? Who would confront the Chief Justice with such a sign? There is madness in the world.

About 3:30 a.m.: George and I dropped Larry off last week. I went to bed and fell asleep immediately.

About 6 a.m.: I got a call from Larry, who wanted to know what kind of dog food I wanted some with Al Grupa's dog. I got mad and scolded the poor boy out for waking me, and I haven't seen or heard from him since. I went back to sleep.

About 11:30 a.m.: I got up, washed, dressed and went to "the wreaths." (The spot where President John F. Kennedy was shot was marked with flowers and wreaths by mourning residents of Dallas.) I saw Officer Chaney (a Dallas policeman with whom Ruby was friendly) on the curb and asked him to show me the wreaths. The wreaths were fired



Jack Ruby . . . "I had no thought of doing what I did."

from. He did and I looked up and felt sick. I went over to the place.

"We grieve for you," I said. I looked at each wreath and read what they said. It was too sad. "We grieve for you, Mr. President," I said to him.

About noon: I saw Wes Weiss, a disk jockey I know, and we talked for a few minutes. I told him that I got Henry Wade to talk to KLIF-TV on the phone. Then I got into my car and saw Capt. Fritz and Chief Curry walking over to the scene of the murder of the President. I backed

up and blew my horn to Wes Weiss.

"Wes," I talked. "There goes Fritz and Curry. Take a picture. Wes did and I drove off."

About 1:15 p.m.: I went to Got's Surf Bar, and a lot of guys are talking about the Weissman ad. They're screaming mad. I said: "Look what I've got. Three pictures. 'Impeach Earl Warren.'"

One of the men said, "I'm quitting Dallas. This is a sick town."

Another man said, "Remember when someone spit on Vice President Johnson here in Dallas?" The man said, "I'm through. I'm quitting Dallas."

I said: "This town was good enough for you when you made money. Don't start that kind of rumor. Don't hurt our town."

Someone else said: "Dallas is dead. Did you hear about the children cheering when they heard the news of President Kennedy's murder?"

I got sick. I didn't believe that children anywhere would cheer the murder of such a man as President Kennedy. Not even Castro would cheer, I thought.

About 2:30 p.m.: I called Lawyer Stanley Kaufman and told him I had this picture and thought he should do something.

"What?" he said. "I don't know what."

I went back to the guys and made a speech about Dallas being a good town. I got off around 3:30. Then I left.

About 4 p.m.: I went to Ev's. I showed her the pictures of the Warren sign. Ev said: "If the city lets them put up such a sign, why should we worry? (The sign has since been taken down.) That Oswald creep, that's something to worry about." Ev says she said, "Someone ought to shoot him." But if she did, I didn't hear her. Still, I had no thought of doing what I did.

I walked over to the President's coffin. I was in the White House and drank

white wine and I got to bed. I was tired out from crying.

About 5 p.m.: I left Ev's went home and made myself dinner. I watched the mourning pass by the President's coffin—thousands of them—thousands of grieving Americans.

About 10 p.m.: I went to the Carousel and called Buck Wall and Joe Feder. Then I called Ev and asked how she was. She said, "Awful." I said I'd call her back.

I called her back about 20 minutes later. I heard the television

on in the background. I asked her what was happening. She said: "Sadness is all. They're moving that creep to the jail in the morning . . . at 10. I hope he gets killed."

"What good would that do?" I said.

"He should be shot, that's all," Ev said. She said she felt worse and was going to bed. I said good night to her. It still did not enter my head to kill him.

About 11 p.m.: I went to the Pogo Club on McKanney Street. A girl said, "Hello Jack," but I wasn't cheerful. Bob Morton (the owner) comes over and apologizes for staying open. I told him not to apologize.

Sunday, Nov. 24, about 1 a.m.: I had no occasion for any gaiety. I was in mourning. I went to bed.

About 9:30 a.m.: I was up early. I was sad. I took my Preludin (diet) pills and a cold prescription. The diet pills help me with my diet but they aggravate me. They make my problems worse, and I had doubled my dosage four or five days before. When I take a drink with Preludin, I get nasty, mean and conceited. My friends don't know me. I don't care about the business. I just want to have a ball. This morning I also took CRD tablets. (?—WRW)

I was watching television. Rabbi Seligson in New York was eulogizing the President. I became very emotional. He really brought this thing home to me.

About 10 a.m.: (the time Oswald was scheduled to be moved from the City Hall to Dallas County Jail. Ruby's home is 30 minutes away by car—WRW): Linn (Karen Linn Bennett) called asking for \$25 to pay her rent. Since we were closed, she was short of money. I told her I'd be going downtown and would send the money to her in care of Western Union in Fort Worth. (Karen Linn Bennett was asked how Ruby sounded at this time and she answered, "He sounded like he was crying and was upset. I had to say, 'Jack, Jack! Are you still there?")

About 10:15 a.m.: I said to George (Senator), "George, I'm going down to 'the wreaths,' then to send Little Linn that money and then take the dog to the club."

I put my money in one pocket and my pistol in my right trouser pocket. I got in my car and pulled out.

My neighbor stopped me in the driveway and said, "Jack, you can build a fence around my yard for your dog." I told him that I'd have it done. I almost missed the road to Dealy (the

assassination site) and had to back up. I passed "the wreaths." The traffic was moving very slow. Many cars were passing the wreaths. Everyone was mourning.

About 11 a.m.: I go down Main Street and I see television and all kinds of people in front of the County Jail. I knew that Oswald was going to be moved at 10. I glanced at a

time past 11. I assumed that it had already been moved to county building from the jail. I continued on up to Western Union office, and passed the City Jail. I saw people there, too. I could see people down the ramp in the basement. I saw that there was no parking place at Western Union so I made a left turn—I'm sorry, but it's illegal—and went into the parking lot. I got out of my car, left Sheba and went to the Western Union office. I had my turn at the Western Union office and went Little Linn \$25. The clerk stamped the message while I was still in the telegraph office. The time says 11:17 a.m. Remember this time.

11:17 a.m.: I walked out of the telegraph office and started back toward my car. I saw the crowd still at the City Hall and I was curious. It's a black and a white from the Western Union office to City Hall. I passed the ramp to the basement of the City Hall. I saw a crowd there. An officer was directing cars out of the basement, and I walked down the ramp just as a car driven by Sam Pease, an officer I've known for years, came up the ramp at full speed. I just took my normal stride and walked down the ramp.

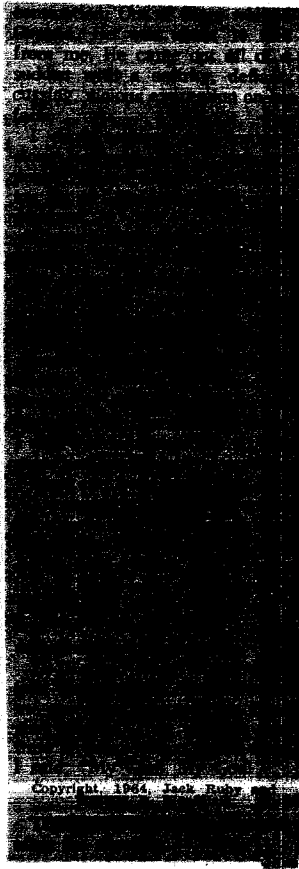
Q: What were your thoughts as you walked down the ramp?

A: I thought I'd see what was happening. I thought they had already transferred Oswald. I never even suspected the scene was even there. I thought something might be doing, and I thought I might get a score for my friend, Gordon McLendon. I also thought I might pass out a few guest cards for the Carousel Club.

Q: As you walked down the ramp, were your hands in or out of your pockets?

A: Out.  
11:18 a.m.: I reached the bottom of the ramp. I didn't know anyone I knew. I put my hands into my pockets to be comfortable and walked to get a closer view of whatever was going to happen.

Suddenly there was a group



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