

12/10/65

Reopen The Warren Commission

12/16/65

On November 11, 1965 we told how the Warren Commission in their summary contradicted certain parts of the testimony. Was this necessary in order to maintain their theory of no conspiracy?

November 18, 1965 we related how the Commission seemed to stretch a point or two in order to again come to the conclusion that newsman Seth Kanter was wrong; and therefore Jack Ruby had not visited Parkland Hospital immediately after the assassination. Had the Commission accepted Ruby was at the hospital, as was testified by two witnesses, the Commission would have had to find out how he got there so fast. Could this have involved police transportation? At any rate the Commission ruled Ruby was not at the hospital.

This week we tell how Captain John Will Fritz discredited another peace officer, Roger D. Craig. County Deputy Sheriff Craig gave some very damaging testimony for the Commission's pet theory. Craig said he was standing in front of the Sheriff's office on North Main just a half block from Houston St. when the first shot was fired. In Vol. VI he said:

Mr. Belin: When you heard the explosion, what did you do?

Mr. Craig: Well, the first—nothing. I wrestled with my mind. I knew it was a shot but—uh—I didn't want to believe it. But, a few seconds later, I heard another explosion and, this time, I knew it was a shot. And, as I began to run, I heard a third one. I was running towards Houston Street.

Belin: How many explosions did you hear altogether?

Craig: Three.

Belin: About how far were these noises apart?

Craig: The first one was—uh—about three seconds 2 or 3 seconds.

Belin: Two or 3 seconds between the first and the second?

Craig: Well, it was quite a pause between there. It could have been a little longer.

Belin: And what about between the second and third?

Craig: Not more than 2 seconds. It was—they were real rapid.

Craig talked to a young couple at the scene then turned them over to Officer Lummie Lewis and continued as we see from his testimony below:

Mr. Belin: "Now, about how many minutes was this after the time that you had turned that young couple over to Lummie Lewis that you heard this whistle?"

Deputy Sheriff Roger Craig: "Fourteen or fifteen minutes."

Mr. Belin: Fourteen or fifteen minutes.

Craig: Yes.

Belin: Was this you mean after the shooting?

Craig: "After the—from the time I heard the first shot."

Belin: All Right.

Craig: Yes. So I turned and—uh—saw a man start to run down the hill on the north side of Elm Street, running

him. But my first glance at him I was more interested in the man coming down the hill—but my first glance at him he struck me as a Negro.

Belin: Is that what your opinion is today?

Craig: "Well, I—I couldn't say, because I didn't get a good enough look at him."

Belin: "What kind and what color station wagon was it?"

Craig: "It was light colored—almost—uh—it looked white to me."

Belin: "What model or make was it?"

Craig: "I thought it was a Nash."

Belin: Why would you think it was a Nash?

Craig: Because it had a built-in luggage rack on the top. And—uh—at the time, this was the only type car I could fit with that type luggage rack.

Belin: A Nash Rambler—is that what you're referring to?

Craig: Yes; with a rack on the back portion of the car, you know.

Belin: Did it have a Texas license plate or not?

Craig: It had the same color. I couldn't see the—uh—name with the numbers on it. I could just barely make them out. They were at an angle where I couldn't make the numbers of the—uh—any of the writing on it. But—uh—I'm sure it was a Texas plate.

After a few more pages of testimony Belin asked:

Anything else about the assassination that you think might be important that we haven't discussed here?

Craig: No; except—uh—except for the fact that it came out later that Mrs. Paine does own a station wagon and—uh—it has a luggage rack on top. And this came out of course, later, after I got back to the office, I didn't know about this. Buddy Walthers brought it up. I believe they went by the house and the car was parked in the driveway."

It didn't take Fritz long to take care of Deputy Sheriff Craig.

Fritz: "One deputy sheriff who started to talk to me but he was telling me some things that I knew wouldn't help us and I didn't talk to him but someone else took an affidavit from him. His story that he was telling—didn't fit with what we knew to be true."

Mr. Ball: Craig stated that about 15 minutes after the shooting he saw a man, a white man, leave the Texas State Book Depository Building, run across a lawn, and get into a white Rambler driven by a colored man.

Fritz: "I don't think that is true."

What does Fritz mean when he says Craig's testimony "wouldn't help us." How does Fritz know Craig's testimony was untrue. Fritz was still at Parkland Hospital when the suspicious character ran down the grassy slope. Fritz tells of his arrival at the School Book Depository Building this way:

Mr. Ball: What time did you arrive there?

Fritz: Well, sir; we arrived there—we arrived at the hospital at 12:45 if you want that time, and at the scene of the offense at 12:58.

The next most obvious question for any lawyer would have been to determine how Fritz decided that Deputy Sheriff Roger D. Craig's testimony was untrue, other than that it "wouldn't help us."

But that question was never asked.