

## Reopen The Warren Commission

Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry appears to this writer to be a failure. For too many years Dallas was consistently near the top in murders per thousand among large cities in the United States.

In concluding his testimony before the Warren Commission, he topped the record for the unmitigated gall of his final remark.

**MR. McCLOY.** I guess that is all, except the general question I have of Chief Curry. Do you know anything else with respect to this whole matter that you think would be of any help to this Commission in getting at the facts?

**MR. CURRY.** Not that I know of, except to say we were extremely sorry that, of course, this thing happened in Dallas\* . . .

Unfortunately, in this instance, the Chief was telling the truth. Assassination within the city limits injured the Dallas image.

In the beginning of the Curry testimony Mr. Rankin asked:

. . . When did you learn of the arrest of Lee Harvey Oswald?

**CURRY.** While I was out at Parkland Hospital.

**RANKIN.** Do you know about what time that was, the day?

**CURRY.** It was on the 22d and the best I recall it was around 1 o'clock or maybe a little after 1 o'clock.

**RANKIN.** How did that come to your attention?

**CURRY.** Some of my officers came to me and said they had arrested a suspect in the shooting of our Officer Tippit.

**RANKIN.** What else did they say?

**CURRY.** They also told me a little later, I believe, that he was a suspect also in the assassination of the President.

**RANKIN.** What did you do then?

**CURRY.** I didn't do anything at the time. I was at the hospital, and I remained at the hospital until some of the Secret Service asked me to prepare two cars that we were informed that President Kennedy had expired and we were requested to furnish two cars for President Johnson and some of his staff to return to Love Field.

**RANKIN.** Did you do that?

**CURRY.** Yes; I did.

**RANKIN.** What else—what did you do after that?

**CURRY.** After the planes departed from Love Field, I was there for the inauguration of the President, and then we left the plane, and Judge Sarah Hughes and myself, and I remained at Love Field for some, I guess an hour.

Some testimony omitted here.

MR. DULLES. Did I understand correctly, how long were you at Love Field after the plane of the President left?

CURRY. As I recall it was approximately an hour.

DULLES. That is what I thought.

CURRY. We waited there until the casket bearing the President, and then the cars bearing Mrs. Kennedy arrived, and it was, I would judge an hour perhaps.

RANKIN. Then what did you do?

CURRY. I returned to my office at city hall.

RANKIN. Did you do anything about Lee Harvey Oswald at that time?

CURRY. No. As I went into the city hall it was over-

~~with the news media.~~  
RANKIN. What did you do about that?

CURRY. I didn't do anything. They were jammed into the north hall of the third floor, which are the offices of the criminal investigation division. The television trucks, there were several of them around the city hall. I went into my administrative offices, I saw cables coming through the administrative assistant office and through the deputy chief of traffic through his office, and running through the hall they had a live TV set up on the third floor, and it was a bedlam of confusion.

RANKIN. Did anyone of the police department give them permission to do this?

CURRY. I noticed — well, I don't know who gave them permission because I wasn't there. When I returned they were up there.

RANKIN. Did you inquire about whether permission had been given?

CURRY. No; I didn't. We had in the past had always permitted free movement of the press around the city hall but we had never been faced with anything like this before where we had national and international news media descending upon us in this manner.

Some testimony omitted here.

CURRY. Captain Fritz principally interrogated him, I believe.

RANKIN. Was that his responsibility?

CURRY. Yes; it was. There were several people in the office. It seems to me we were violating every principle of interrogation, the method by which we had to interrogate.

RANKIN. Will you explain to the Commission what you mean by that?

CURRY. Ordinarily an interrogator in interrogating a suspect will have him in a quiet room alone or perhaps with one person there.

RANKIN. Is that your regular practice?

CURRY. That is the regular practice.

RANKIN. Tell us how this was done?

CURRY. This we had representatives from the Secret Service, we had representatives from the FBI, we had representatives from the Ranger Force, and they were—

\* Underlining done by the author.

and the one or two detectives from the homicide bureau. This was, well, it was just against all principles of good interrogation practice.

RANKIN. By representatives can you tell us how many were from each of these agencies that you describe?

CURRY. I can't be sure. I recall I believe two from the FBI, one or two, Inspector Kelley was there from Secret Service, and I believe another one of his men was there. There was one, I recall seeing one man from the Rangers. I don't recall who he was. I just remember now that there was one, Captain Fritz, and one or two of his detectives—this was in a small office.

RANKIN. Did you do anything about this when you found out there were so many, did you give any instructions about it?

CURRY. No; I didn't. This was an unusual case. In fact, I had received a call from the FBI requesting that they have a representative from there in the hearing room. And we were trying to cooperate with all agencies concerned in this, and I called Captain Fritz and asked him to permit a representative of the FBI to come in.

Some testimony omitted here.

RANKIN. Did you have any tape recordings of the interviews with Mr. Oswald?

CURRY. I do not have.

RANKIN. Did anyone?

CURRY. Not to my knowledge. Unless someone from the FBI or the Secret Service, if they recorded it, I don't know.

RANKIN. How many times was he interrogated, do you know?

CURRY. No; I do not know that.

RANKIN. You never examined him yourself at any time?

CURRY. No, sir; I didn't.

Some testimony omitted here.

REPRESENTATIVE FORD. When you heard the first report, did you grab a communications set and give this order?

CURRY. Almost immediately.

FORD. What was the order that you gave?

CURRY. As I recall it, "Get someone up in the railroad yard to check those people." There was already an officer up there.

RANKIN. How do you know that?

CURRY. They assigned officers to every overpass. We went with the Secret Service, Batchelor and Chief Lunday had went over this route with Secret Service agents Lawson and Sorrels and they had run the route 2 or 3 days prior to this and pointed out every place where they wanted security officers, and we placed them there where they asked for them.

RANKIN. Did you see an officer there when you looked up?

CURRY. I couldn't recognize him, but I could see an officer whoever it was.

FORD. Did you get this order over the PA system before the second and third shots?

CURRY. I don't believe so, I am not sure. I am not positive. Because they were in pretty rapid succession. But after I noticed some commotion in the President's car and a motorcycle officer ran up aside of me and I asked him what had happened and he said shots had been fired, and I said, "Has the President been hit or has the President's party been hit?"

And he said, "I am sure they have."

I said, "Take us to the hospital immediately," and I got on the radio and I told them to notify Parkland Hospital to stand by for an emergency, and this is approximately, I would say, perhaps a couple of miles or so to Parkland Hospital from this, and we went to Parkland and I notified them to have them to be standing by for an emergency, and we went out there under siren escort and went into the emergency entrance.

As I recall, I got out of the car and rushed to the emergency entrance and told them to bring the stretchers out, and they loaded the President, President Kennedy and Governor Connally onto stretchers and took them into the hospital.

Mrs. Kennedy, I went into the hospital, and I know she was outside the door of where they were working with the President, and someone suggested to her that she sit down and she was very calm, and she said, "I am all right. Some of your people need to sit down more than I do."

Some testimony omitted here.

CURRY. I believe it was about 4 o'clock I believe when I returned to the office.

DULLES. It was 4 o'clock when you returned to the office from Love Field?

CURRY. I believe so, I am not positive.

When I arrived they were in the process of, Captain Fritz and his men, were in the process of investigating this murder of Tippit and also the assassination of the President.

RANKIN. Did you make an inquiry in regard to the progress?

CURRY. I think I did. I asked him how he was coming along and he said they were making good progress.

Some testimony omitted here.

CURRY. It is a police assemblyroom where we hold our regular roll calls. They have a stage whereby prisoners are brought up on this stage.

RANKIN. How large is the room?

CURRY. The room, I would say, is perhaps 50 feet long and 20 feet wide.

RANKIN. Who was allowed in the room at the time of this showup?

CURRY. Presumably only the news media and police officers. I have been told that Jack Ruby was seen in this showuproom also.

RANKIN. About what time of day was that?

CURRY. As I recall, this was fairly late Friday night,

I believe.

RANKIN. Do you know who was there to try to identify Lee Oswald?

CURRY. No, I don't. The news media, a number of them, had continued to say, "Let us see him. What are you doing to him? How does he look?"

I think one broadcaster that I had heard or someone had told me about, said that Lee Harvey Oswald is in custody of the police department, and that something about he looked all right when he went in there, they wouldn't guarantee how he would look after he had been in custody of the Dallas police for a couple of hours, which intimated to me that when I heard this that they thought we were mistreating the prisoner.

RANKIN. Did you do anything about that?

CURRY. I offered then at that time—they wanted to see him and they wanted to know why they couldn't see him and I said we had no objection to anybody seeing him.

And when he was being moved down the hall to go back up in the jail they would crowd on him and we just had to surround him by officers to get to take him to the jail elevator to take him back upstairs, to let him rest from the interrogation.

RANKIN. And this showup, how many people attended?

CURRY. I would think perhaps 75 people. I am just making an estimate. I told them if they would not try to overrun the prisoner and not try to interrogate him we would bring him to the showup room. There was—this,

thinking also that these newspaper people had been all over Love Field, and had been down at the assassination scene, and we didn't know but what some of them might recognize him as being present, they might have seen him around some of these places.

Now, Mr. Wade, the district attorney, was present, at this time and his assistant was present, and as I recall, I asked Mr. Wade, I said, "Do you think this will be all right?" And he said, "I don't see anything wrong with it."

RANKIN. Did you find out where Jack Ruby was during this showup?

CURRY. I didn't know Jack Ruby. Actually the first time I saw Jack Ruby to know Jack Ruby was in a bond hearing or I believe it was a bond hearing and I recognized him sitting at counsel's table.

The impression has been given that a great many of the Dallas Police Department knew Jack Ruby.

RANKIN. What is the fact in that regard?

CURRY. The fact of that as far as I know there are a very small percentage of the Dallas Police Department that knows Jack Ruby.

RANKIN. Did you make an inquiry to find out?

CURRY. Yes; I did, yes sir. And so far as I know most of the men who knew Jack Ruby are men who were assigned to the vice squad of the police department or who had worked the radio patrol district where he had places and in the course—

RANKIN. How many men would that be?

CURRY. I am guessing perhaps 4 men. This is merely a guess on my part.

RANKIN. How large is your police force?

CURRY. Approximately 1,200. I would say 1,175 people. I would say less, I believe less than 50 people knew him. From what I have found out since then that he is the type that if he saw a policeman, or he came to his place of business he would probably run up and make himself

acquainted with him.

I also have learned since this time he tried to ingratiate himself with any of the news media or any of the reporters who had anything to do, he was always constantly trying to get publicity for his clubs or for himself.

RANKIN. Now, at this showup, is there some screen between the person in custody?

CURRY. There is a time—there wasn't at this time.

RANKIN. Why not?

CURRY. No particular reason. They just, a lot of the news media say they didn't think they could see him up there or couldn't get pictures of him up there and we brought him in there in front of the screen and kept him there as I recall only about 4 or 5 minutes and shoving up close to him and taking shots of him and took him upstairs and I believe the district attorney and his assistant stayed down and perhaps talked to the news media for several minutes. But we took Harvey Oswald back up stairs and I think I went back to my office.

DULLES. This was the evening of Friday was it not?

CURRY. I believe so, sir.

DULLES. Did you say Ruby was present that evening?

CURRY. I have understood he was. But to my own knowledge, I wouldn't have known him because I didn't know him.

Curry, a former truck driver turned policeman, who climbed the ladder fast in Dallas. At age fifty-three, Curry has now retired as Chief. It is rumored that his health has been deteriorating since the assassination, and is getting worse.

Captain Will Fritz, a veteran of more than thirty years on the police force of Dallas, is respected in some circles. According to reports, Captain Fritz and Chief Curry did not like each other and seldom spoke.

MR. BALL. Do you remember what you said to Oswald and what he said to you?

MR. FRITZ. I can remember the thing that I said to him and what he said to me but I will have trouble telling you which period of questioning those questions were in because I kept no notes at the time, and these notes and things that I have made I would have to make several days later, and the questions may be in the wrong place.

BALL. What is your best memory of what you said to him when he first came in?

FRITZ. I first asked him as I do of most people something about where he was from, and where he was raised and his education, and I asked him where he went to school and he told me he went to school in New York for a while, he had gone to school in Fort Worth some, that he didn't finish high school, that he went to the Marines, and finished high school training in the Marines.

And I don't remember just what else I asked him just the general questions for getting acquainted with him, and so I would see about how to talk to him, and Mr. Hosty spoke up and asked him something about Russia, and asked if he had been to Russia, and he asked him if he had been to Mexico City, and this irritated Oswald a great deal and he beat on the desk and went into a kind of tantrum.

Mr. Hosty was the bridge playing companion of General Edwin A. Walker's aide, Robert Allan Surrey, according to Surrey's own statement.

BALL. What did he say when he was asked if he had been to Mexico City?

FRITZ. He said he had not been. He did say he had been to Russia, he was in Russia, I believe he said for some

time.

BALL. He said he had not been in Mexico City?

FRITZ. At that time he told me he had not been in Mexico City.

BALL. Who asked the question whether or not he had been to Mexico City?

FRITZ. Mr. Hosty. I wouldn't have know anything about Mexico City.

BALL. Was there anything said about Oswald's wife?

FRITZ. Yes, sir. He said, he told Hosty, he said, "I know you." He said, "You accosted my wife on two occasions," and he was getting pretty irritable and so I wanted to quiet him down a little bit because I noticed if I talked to him in a calm, easy manner it wasn't very hard to get him to settle down, and I asked him what he meant by accosting, I thought maybe he meant some physical abuse or something and he said, "Well, he threatened her." And he said, "He practically told her she would have to go back to Russia." And he said, "He accosted her on two different occasions."

BALL. Was there anything said about where he lived?

FRITZ. Where he lived? Right at that time?

BALL. Yes.

FRITZ. I am sure I had no way of asking him where he lived but I am not too sure about that—just how quick he told me because he corrected me, I thought he lived in Irving and he told me he didn't live in Irving. He lived on Beckley as the officer had told me outside.

(At this point Mr. Dulles entered the hearing room.)

FRITZ. And I asked him about that arrangement and I am again, I can't be too sure when this question was asked. I asked him why his wife was living in Irving and why he was living on Beckley and he said she was living with Mrs. Paine. Mrs. Paine was trying to learn to speak Russian and that his wife, Mrs. Oswald, had a small baby and Mrs. Paine helped with the baby and his wife taught Mrs. Paine Russian and it made a good arrangement for both of them and he stayed over in town. I thought it was kind of an awkward arrangement and I questioned him about the arrangement a little bit and I asked him how often he went out there and he said weekends.

Some testimony omitted here.

BALL. How long a time did you sit with Oswald and question him this first time?

FRITZ. The first time, not but a few minutes.

BALL. That was the time Hosty and Bookhout were there?

FRITZ. That is right. But sometimes when I would leave the office to do something else, it is hard to imagine how many things we had happened at the one time or how many different officers we had doing different things without seeing it but we were terribly busy.

I had called my officers back on duty and had every one of them assigned to something, so going back and forth kept me pretty busy running back and forth at the time of questioning.

I don't know when I would leave, I suppose Mr. Bookhout and Mr. Hosty asked him a few questions, but I don't believe they questioned him a great deal while I was gone.

BALL. You said just a few minutes, what did you mean by that, 15, 20, 25?

FRITZ. It would be pretty hard to guess at a time like that because we weren't even quitting for lunch so I don't

even know, time didn't mean much right at that time. For a few minutes, you would think 30 or 40 minutes the first time.

**BALL.** Thirty or forty minutes?

The Commission didn't find why Fritz first interview with Oswald was cut short, but Detective Richard M. Sims seems to have given the answer in testimony in Vol. VII on pages 162-3.

Some testimony omitted here.

**BALL.** How long were you on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building?

**SIMS.** Well, sir; let's see—at the time the hulls were found, I think the hulls were found about 1:15, so we were down there just a minute or so. Let's see—we got back to the city hall at 2:15 and we went over and talked to Sheriff Decker 10 or 15 minutse.

Some testimony omitted here.

**BALL.** Now, you left the building about what time?

**SIMS.** Well, we arrived at the city hall around 2 o'clock—I'll have to look at the record—on this—about 2:15—we left there evidently about 2 o'clock.

**BALL.** You and who?

**SIMS.** Captain Fritz and Boyd.

**BALL.** Then where did you go?

**SIMS.** Captain Fritz went over and talked to Sheriff Decker. He sent word he wanted to talk to Captain Fritz, so we talked to the sheriff and then we went to the city hall.

Some testimony omitted here.

The Commission asked neither Fritz nor Decker what this important and little mentioned personal conference was all about. Fritz and Decker rode in the same car from Parkland Hospital to the Texas School Book Depository. Each officer went to his own office, then shortly Decker called and asks Fritz to return that fifteen blocks to have a personal conference with Decker. Why could they not talk over the phone? What was the content of this important personal confrontation? The Commission certainly did not try to determine.

In sports this is referred to as a new huddle to get the signals straight.

**FRITZ.** I am guessing at that time.

**BALL.** He hadn't been searched up to that time, had he?

**FRITZ.** Yes, sir; he had been searched.

**BALL.** Wasn't he searched later in the jail office?

**FRITZ.** He was searched, the officers who arrested him made the first search, I am sure. He had another search at the building and I believe that one of my officers, Mr. Boyd, found some cartridges in his pocket in the room after he came to the city hall. I can't tell you the exact time when he searched him.

BALL. You don't have the record of the time when he was searched?

FRITZ. No.

BALL. You remember you found a transfer of Dallas Transit Company?

FRITZ. Yes, sir; found a transfer.

BALL. And some bullets.

FRITZ. Bullets; yes, sir. Cartridges.

BALL. He had an identification bracelet, too, didn't he?

FRITZ. I am not sure about that.

BALL. You don't remember?

FRITZ. No.

NOTICE: This editor took pictures at Parkland Hospital in Dallas on the day President Kennedy was murdered. From these pictures, we know there were at least two women taking pictures before the President's body left the hospital. We urge these women to get in touch with the editor of The Midlothian Mirror. The pictures you took might be very important.

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