

File - Early Evidence

A rather unusual thing developed out there: They had trouble locating the lady who was a federal judge to get out there to swear in Johnson; secondly, they had trouble finding the Bible. It is my understanding that they ended up swearing him in with Jackie Kennedy's prayer book.

All this occurred in, I'd say, a matter of 45 minutes. I just stayed long enough to watch it taxi down the runway and take off then returned to the Dallas Police Department because one of my duties was liaison with all the local departments which included the district attorney, the chief of police, and the local head of the Secret Service.

At the police department, I was with Henry Wade, the district attorney, and the chief of police during the rest of the afternoon. There it was a three-ring circus because the White House Press Corps was there and, if you've ever dealt with them, you've really got something to deal with.

Later that evening Oswald attended a so-called press conference. The reason that he was brought to the show-up down in the basement was really more for the purpose of demonstrating to the press that the allegations that the police had beaten up Oswald were untrue. I first knew about it when the District Attorney Henry Wade and I were talking to the Chief of Police, Jesse Curry, and Curry said, "Let's go down to the show-up." So Wade, Curry, and I walked down to the basement where it was being held and stood partially in the doorway. The press was already there including Jack Ruby, who was sitting on the second row. That was on Friday night, the night of the assassination. I can't recall just what all he was saying other than his shouting some remarks and throwing his fist in the air and that sort of thing. It's hard to say what kind of opinion you'd have of a fellow that you'd just observed there, but considering the stress he must have been under, he seemed pretty cool and not overly excited. He seemed to be very sure of himself with a feeling of a sense of accomplishment.

Earlier in the evening, about 8:00 o'clock, the division chief had talked to me on the telephone and informed me that the FBI in Washington demanded that we bring to them for examination the rifle, the revolver that was used to kill Tippit, as well as the different paraphernalia such as identification cards and other small items that Oswald had on him. I discussed it with the police chief

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*File = Early Evidence*

VINCENT DRAIN, SPECIAL AGENT, FBI 249

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and told him that we'd keep the chain of evidence intact and that  
I would pick them up there myself and wait for them until they  
were examined in Washington then bring them back. So it was  
turned over to us.

By the time we got it all boxed up, it was near midnight.  
Meanwhile Washington was calling down about every fifteen  
minutes wanting to know where the material was. All of a sudden I  
learned that neither American nor Braniff had any flights to  
Washington out of Dallas after midnight. We were told that the  
FBI in Washington wanted the material by morning if we had to  
walk it up there. That's being facetious, but...

Fortunately the commanding general over at Carswell in Fort  
Worth happened to be a good friend of mine and was head of SAC  
(Strategic Air Command) at that time. So I called him and was  
told that the President had asked him to give us all the help that  
we needed. Another agent took me to Fort Worth where they had  
a C-135 tanker plane and crew ready.

It was a little scary on the way up because I was sitting up on  
the deck with the pilot, the co-pilot, and the engineer. This was  
an empty plane, and they were flying high and really letting her  
go. During the flight, they let me listen to all the short wave  
broadcasts about the British, French, and Canadians calling their  
troops and the submarines going to sea because they were afraid  
the Russians might attack.

When we landed at Andrews Air Force Base, an unusual thing  
happened. I had never been in the military service since I had  
joined the FBI prior to the war and had stayed continuously  
through then. When I had arrived at Carswell, the commanding  
general was at the plane with two of his aides. As I got out of the  
car, they all saluted, so I told myself that I'd better salute back.  
When I arrived at Andrews, the commanding general there also  
saluted. I'd gotten used to saluting by that time, so I saluted back.

The commanding general said, "Mr. Drain, we wondered if  
you would relinquish this airplane for us if we'd furnish you a good  
airplane to go back in when you're ready to go?"

Of course, I didn't know that it was my airplane to relinquish  
in the first place, so I said, "Sure, I'll turn it over to you now if  
that's what you want me to say. But I need one when I get ready  
to go; I mean really go!"

*Sowell. No More Silence*

*Sowell*

He said, "We'll give you a good fast airplane," which was an understatement. He gave me his card and I was taken by helicopter over to the Justice Building and landed on the White House lawn. During this time, I had an armed guard from the Air Force until I got safely into the Justice Building.

I talked to Mr. Hoover briefly and then watched them do a lot of the experiments such as firing the rifle, looking for prints, ballistics markings, hairs, fibers, blood stains and anything else that later, down the road, might be relevant to evidence which could be used in the prosecution.

By around midnight on Saturday night, they had the plane ready to go, so I called the commanding general. He sent a helicopter which then flew me to one of those fast F-104's. When we came back, we came back in a hurry! Upon arrival in Dallas, I went directly to the police department and had just turned over the evidence to the police chief on Sunday morning at the time Oswald was killed by Ruby. They then had full custody of it.

The next day I was the representative of the FBI at Tippit's funeral. I remember riding back from the cemetery in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas to the police department with a newspaperman named Jerry O'Leary of the *Washington Star*. As we were talking and listening to the radio, Waggoner Carr, who was the attorney general of Texas at the time, said that he was going to open up a hearing himself. Put it this way: There was quite a bit of competition at that time between the police department, the local district attorney's office, and the Texas attorney general. As a result, after Oswald was killed, the FBI wanted to get all of the evidence and have it brought back to Washington because I think they wanted to preserve it for posterity's sake.

At that time, the police had a homicide captain by the name of Will Fritz who didn't like to turn anything over to anyone else, particularly the FBI. So when we arrived back at the police department, I knew better than to go to the captain. I knew that he wouldn't turn the evidence over because we really didn't have much of an argument for them to turn it over other than for the National Archives since Oswald was dead and Ruby was in jail. But the city manager, Elgin Crull, who was over the police department, was a good friend of mine. I lucked into him when I

went back into the police building and said, "Elgin, I just heard that Waggoner Carr is going to open up some hearings on this thing and subpoena this evidence. Why don't you turn it over to us and let us take it to Washington so that we can preserve it up there?"

He said, "I think that's an excellent idea. Let's get it out of here within the hour." So I picked up the phone, called the office, and got eight agents and headed out of there within the hour. That was, I believe, on Tuesday. Then on Wednesday I took it back to Washington with a visiting agent who had been sent in to help us out, Warren DeBrueys, the head of the New Orleans Crime Commission.

We had four or five baskets full of that stuff, every bit of paper that they had, which was located in a section of the ID Division; a fine fellow by the name of Carl Day was there. Some of it was evidentiary and some of it wasn't. But we weren't taking any chances. I went back to Washington on several occasions and went before the Warren Commission to identify this as to what it was for their benefit.

I spent a considerable amount of time in Washington following the assassination, and I talked to Mr. Hoover quite a bit. All these reports were going in and they were going over to the Warren Commission and to the attorney general about all this business about Hoover having his mind set on one assassin. I never heard this around FBI headquarters. They would brief Hoover on what was being said to the Warren Commission, but I can say that I saw it after it was at the Warren Commission, and it wasn't altered or changed at all. I went over several times as did several of our agents and testified and none of us ever got any instructions from Hoover as to what or what not to say. This is what really bothers me. I read all of this stuff that this happened and that happened, when it didn't happen at all. Why, I think they'd skin your hide if you started instructing somebody to go over and testify a certain way. We had hundreds of agents working on this thing who covered every lead in the book. I don't see how anyone can arrive at any other conclusion than what they arrived at, really!

Of course, time dims your memory a bit, but as I understand it, Oswald was sitting there looking through the scope with the target moving away at 10-12 M.P.H. It was a very easy target. He had

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