

# Man believes he saw Ruby at scene of Oswald's arrest

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For 15 years, George J. Applin Jr. has remained silent about an experience that could have changed the outcome of the investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Applin was one of only two Texas Theatre patrons whom the Warren Commission could locate to testify about the arrest of accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

When authorities questioned Applin, he testified in detail about Oswald's arrest in the theater slightly more than an hour after the assassination.

What he didn't tell them, however, was that he recognized Jack Ruby as one of about four main-floor patrons not identified by the Warren Commission.

"AT THE TIME the Warren Commission had me down there at the post office in Dallas to get my statement, I was afraid to give it (the Ruby information)," Applin said. "I gave everything up to the point of what I gave the police there in town."

Applin said he spoke to a man sitting in a back-row seat — a man he believes was Ruby — as police were about to pounce on Oswald.

"Ruby was sitting down, just watching them," Applin said. "And when Oswald pulled the gun and snapped it at his (a policeman's) head and missed and the darn thing wouldn't fire, that's when I tapped him (Ruby) on the shoulder and told him he had better move because those guns were waving around."

"He just turned around and looked at me. Then he turned around and started watching them."

WHEN POLICE questioned Applin later that day, he couldn't have told them he saw Ruby because he didn't know him by sight. Two days later, after Ruby shot Oswald, his face became known to Applin and the rest of the world.

Four months later, Applin was to recall the Ruby incident under questioning by Warren Commission attorney Joseph A. Ball, but he still declined to identify the man as Ruby.

BALL ASKED Applin if he knew the man or had seen him since. Applin answered no twice, and the testimony was concluded.

"I'm a pretty nervous guy anyway," Applin said in an interview, "because I'll tell you what: After I saw that magazine where all those people they said were kind of connected with some of this had come up dead, it just kind of made me keep a low profile."

The 36-year-old Grayson County concrete finisher said he finally decided to

talk about the Ruby incident because the time elapsed has made it safer and more plausible.

The Warren Commission asserted in 1964 that Ruby acted on impulse and shot Oswald, but the House Assassinations Committee now indicates it has evidence showing Ruby was stalking Oswald at least a day before he killed him in the basement of the old Dallas City Hall.

THE COMMISSION placed Ruby's arrival in his Downtown Dallas Carousel Club at 1:45 p.m. the day of the assassination, which would rule out his appearance in the Texas Theatre when Oswald was arrested between 1:45 and 1:50 p.m.

"Upon arriving at the Carousel Club shortly before 1:45 p.m., Ruby instructed Andrew Armstrong, the Carousel's bartender, to notify employees that the club would be closed that night," the Warren Report stated. "... At 1:51 p.m., Ruby telephoned Ralph Paul in Arlington, Texas, to say that he was going to close his clubs."

But neither the time of Ruby's arrival nor a 1:51 p.m. call to Paul by Ruby is substantiated in Warren Commission testimony.

RUBY TESTIFIED, "I went up to the club, and I told Andy (Armstrong), I said, 'Call everyone and tell them we are not opening.' " Seconds earlier he testified he "could have called my colored boy, Andy, down at the club."

Armstrong testified Ruby called him at the club about 15 or 20 minutes after the president was shot at 12:30 p.m. and that Ruby said, "If anything happens, we are going to close the club."

He said Ruby walked into the club — "I don't recall what time it was" — about five minutes after Armstrong heard an announcement that Kennedy was dead. The president was pronounced dead at about 1 p.m. but it was not announced publicly until shortly after 1:30 p.m.

When Ruby arrived at the club, Armstrong said, he "didn't say anything — he just got on the telephone."

Larry Crafard, an employee at the Carousel who was with Armstrong at the club during the assassination, said Ruby showed up "about 2 or 2:30 ... about two hours" after the assassination at 12:30 p.m.

Crafard said Ruby didn't tell Armstrong to notify performers that the club would be closed until 30 to 45 minutes after he arrived. When asked if Ruby made any phone calls, Crafard could recall only one call Ruby made to his sister.

Toll call records show an 8-minute call was made from the Carousel to the

home of Ruby's sister in Chicago, Eileen Kaminsky, at 2:05 p.m.

RECORDS ALSO SHOW a 3-minute call was made from the Carousel to a drive-in restaurant in Arlington owned by Paul at 1:51 p.m.

But Paul, one of Ruby's closest friends, testified Ruby called him for the first time that day after Paul had left the drive-in and gone home shortly after 2 p.m. He said the call came at 2:45 p.m. Paul said Ruby called and asked him, "Did you hear what happened?"

Paul did get a 2-minute call at his home from the Carousel at 2:43 p.m., toll records show. This was one minute after someone from the Carousel had called his restaurant in Arlington and apparently learned Paul had left for home.

THE WARREN Commission timing of Ruby's arrival in the Carousel Club at 1:45 p.m. was used to dispute another suspicious sighting of Ruby at Parkland Memorial Hospital at about 1:30 p.m. when Kennedy's death was announced.

The commission apparently believed Ruby when he said he wasn't at the hospital, although the source for the story was credible. He was Seth Kantor, a White House correspondent who had known Ruby from Kantor's earlier days as a Dallas reporter. Kantor said Ruby shook hands and called him by his first name.

The commission said Kantor probably was mistaken because it doubted Ruby could have returned to his club from the hospital through congested traffic.

KANTOR'S STORY, retold last year in a book he wrote about Ruby, apparently has been accepted as fact by the House Assassinations Committee.

If so, it doesn't rule out Applin's sighting of Ruby at the Texas Theatre shortly before 1:50 p.m. The News timed the 6.5-mile trip through heavy traffic from the hospital to the theater, using Interstate 35-E and staying within the speed limit.

None of the test runs took more than 12 minutes. This would have permitted Ruby to travel from the hospital at about 1:30 p.m. to the theater at about 1:45 p.m. without speeding.

The 3.2-mile trip from the Texas Theatre, at 231 W. Jefferson, to the former site of the Carousel Club, at 1312½ Commerce, took from 9 to 9½ minutes at an average speed of 30 mph. This would have given Ruby time to drive from the theater to his club in time to call his sister in Chicago.