

Phone Call Notes--
Conversation with Jean Hill, November 20, 1965

By D. Hifton?

The main purpose of the phone call was to contact Hill and Moorman concerning the impending stories I had heard might be out the following Tuesday. Moorman had been sent one enlargement during the summer, she knew I had been doing work on her photo, and I wanted to make some preparation for the possibility that she might get a flood of phone calls concerning her photo, because I assumed her name would be used, in the article, as well as mine--- though I was not sure at that time which magazine would run it. The conversation quickly dissolved into other issues. She told me that she and Moorman are not talking anymore. Mary's ~~XXXX~~ husband ("he's a nut") and Hill's boyfriend (she's divorced) decided that this should be the case after Jones Harris' visit to Dallas. Harris got Mary Moorman over to Jean Hill's house. Jean says: "I don't know why, but I let my hair down". She says however, that she "swore Jones Harris to secrecy". I assured her he hadn't told "even me" (what a laugh---he tells me nothing) about the existence of the interview. I specifically asked her whether what she told him concerns what she saw or what she thinks about the assassination. She made it clear it was the former. She thinks very highly of me, it seems, because Jones Harris thinks very highly of me. (Although we frequently squabble on the phone, Jones and I portray each other as investigative geniuses when we each talk separately to Dallas witnesses. This helps witnesses loosen up in his presence, and gives us something to argue about---because he refuses to tell me what they say).

I then asked her if she saw someone behind the wall during the shooting. She said no. Thinking back to my conversation with Altgens ("A whole group of people suddenly appeared behind the wall just before the motorcade came by....") I said that someone else (certainly no names!) recalled differently. Then, trying to worm more information out, I used what I call the method of "probing for assent".

"I recently acquired a whole set of photos which show the view down there on the plaza from different locations. Mrs. Hill, you were so close to that wall you could practically touch it. Now there were about 20 people standing there facing that wall. And only two were called to testify before the Commission. If I were a Dallas citizen who had seen what actually happened, and if I saw someone leaning over that wall shooting the President---then I'm not so sure I'd admit it if someone called me up on the phone and asked me about it"

"Well!" she exclaimed, with obvious relief, "I'm certainly glad you (emphasis hers) understand".

I joked a bit about her unlike the others having passed her "FBI Test", and that's why she was called to testify. "No," she said "they just had to call me" informing me that she had made too much of a public fuss to be ignored. She kept saying how she disliked intensely the person doing the questioning: "He kept trying to make a monkey out of me!!!"

She informed me that Jones Harris had brought the volume ~~EE~~ her testimony to her house. That's the only time she's seen it. She thinks and implied and practically said that what's in that published transcript is not everything she said: ie there have been deletions. I tend not to believe her, and had trouble pinning her down.

containin

One reason, of course, is that if there are deletions they concern what she told ~~Jones Harris~~ when she "let her hair down". I was forewarned by her tone that she would not go into it on the phone, but I felt that in person, she would have told ~~me~~ me anything and everything she had told ~~him~~ him; she even seemed a little bit annoyed that he hadn't told me any of it (despite her exhortations to ~~him~~ about secrecy) and I quickly found out that the easiest way to draw her out is to subtly minimize her importance. Then she's apt to let you know of the existence of what she is aware of, even if she holds back specifics.

However, I worry lest what she told Jones Harris was not merely her own speculations.

I brought up her testimony of the railroad yards, her "not wanting to be in an anything", and broached the possibility of assassins being dressed as police, and quickly raised the possibility of police behind the wall, standing amongst those doing the shooting:

"Can you think of a better disguise!" went her answer to this one.

I almost fell off the chair. Her whole tone was so positive and assertive on that one.

We talked about photos taken at the time; I said I thought there was some doctored done on areas behind the wall.

She said: "They'll let you see exactly what they want you to see". She knows the Warren Report is a fraud and a hoax.

I think I used the words "fantastic hoax", or "emperors new clothes" or some such description, and she ~~replied~~ replied by at least doubling, in her own tone and conviction, the "omph" I had put into the question. Yet she refuses to say, in English words: "Yes I saw another man shoot Kennedy".

I got the impression she thinks Johnson is involved in the assassination. This is because of her eagerness to tell me how she's so outspoken down there; how she's not supposed to say either what she saw, or who she thinks is responsible.

The secret service reenactment photos clearly show how close Jean Hill was to that wall. (Hill and Moorman were directly across the street from Zapruder).

She thinks its "ridiculous, stupid" any theory that a Communist killed Kennedy, or even a group of Communists.

If you were a sober headed German living in Germany during the Nazi regime, you might disagree with the government, recognize it for what it was, yet fear it enough not to speak out. Jean Hill is sober headed enough to be a Dallasite who pooh-pooh's any Communist conspiracy theory. I think she saw exactly what happened. Yet she is afraid to speak completely freely. What more frightening representation of authority that is destroying authority that was than to see your ~~own~~ own local police shoot down the President of the U.S. If this is true, its so psychologically incongruous that it would be hard to imagine the sort of emotions experienced by any witnesses.

I asked Jean Hill, "Why didn't you tell the authorities that afternoon exactly what you saw? You had no idea THEN that there would be a coverup."

"Are you kidding" she answered. "If they could do that to the President of the United States," her voice trailed off, and she didn't continue.

It is very embarrassing to pursue a conversation such as this because you are both so aware that you are teetering on this brink of information that is such dynamite.

I urged her to read the Sylvan Fox book, and praised her for having the courage to stand up for what she thinks is right.

I said: "Mrs. Hill, I think that book should make citizens of Dallas realize that they have not so much to fear. If my photographic effort is eventually successful, I might not have to ask anyone any questions about what went on behind the wall. I will simply show them a good photograph and say "Here---didn't you see this". Mrs. Hill, ~~XXXXXX~~ don't you think those 20 or so people might admit then what they saw?"

"No!" she said. "They'll never admit what they saw."

Anyway, I'm quite sure she told Jones Harris everything.

(In this connectinn, Jones Harris called and seemed extremely touchy that I had even gotten from Hill information that his conversation with her even existed! As if he had used his usual urgent tones to tell her not to tell anyone else the earth shattering news that was told him, and she had disobeyed his dictum. He was willing to bet me that she hadn't told me what she told him; I missed a great chance to bluff and see his reaction. He seemed very smugly satisfied that he was right, when I admitted she hadn't).

If Jones Harris ever gets high one night at a party, I'll bring over a bottle of truth syrum and ~~XXXXXX~~ a tape recorder, and maybe we'll find out what Jean Hill saw. Or perhaps Jones will will his memory cells to the National Archives.

Item: Jean Hill claims that the first picture Mary Moorman took "has been destroyed". (very dramatic tones, accent on the word "destroyed"). "Influence was exerted", she curtly informed me. This influence, it seems, was Mary's husband. (Mary Moorman denies t at the first picture was destroyed. She elaims she still has it.).

The man who offered Moorman money for the picture (Jean Hills testimony) was not a newsman, but a lawyer from Texas. Moorman likes to minimize the incident. Hill likes to make it dramatic. Moorman likes to pretend she didn't see anything (until her last conversation); Hill likes to indicate that she knows a lot and isn't speaking. Hill and Moorman were ~~XXXX~~ sent one enlargement and one print. Hill was quite excited about it, and really thought I had something, according to Moorman. Moorman says "I'm not so sure". Moorman is very conservative. Therefore, if SHE says Hill was excited, she really means it!