

see Barnes
testimony
7/8/67

Sylvia: Very good letter on the CBS programs. I, too, was interested in the interview of Murray Jackson. It struck me that the timing was off on what Jackson alleged to be a reported disturbance. The disturbance was in my opinion a minor accident, which Jackson may indeed have referred to both Tippit and ~~xxxx~~ Nelson at 12:45pm. This may have been the impetus needed to get Tippit to 10th and Patton, either deliberately or inadvertently (the latter seems more likely). The Commission's attempt to have us believe that zig-zagging from south Oak Cliff to 8th and ~~g~~ from there backwards to 10th (in so far as Dealey Plaza is concerned) in order to go directly to the TSBDB is ridiculous. Tippit may very well have been on his way to the TSBDB, but on hearing from the dispatcher (Jackson?) that an accident had occurred at Patton and 10th which needed checking, he would report back to it. Actually, the assassination occurred in my opinion right on the heels of this minor accident on 10th and Patton; since the airwaves were noticeably occupied for a spell there, it could be that the dispatcher's message reached J.D. at 12:45pm even as he was hurrying to Dealey Plaza. Tippit's unanswered call at 12:54pm was in regard to this accident in my opinion. He either reported something on it or called for more information. It is my conviction that this was deliberately removed from the police tapes by the Dallas police. (However, this can sound awfully weak; one is forced to ask: why, if they were erasing tapes, did they not erase even the slight notation of Tippit's call? I suppose this could be answered by oversight. But it is weak. This I admit. Still, it does not negate the theory: that Tippit was calling in regard to the accident.)

Mrs. Clemons told me, for example, that the tow truck which removed the damaged car was just rounding Patton onto Jefferson when Tippit drove up. She remarked that a lady in a relatively late model car was still parked; ~~that~~ Mrs. Clemons seemed to feel the lady was involved (or certainly most interested) in the accident. It was an elderly, stoutish lady, since Mrs. Clemons foolishly insisted that it was Marguerite Oswald!

At any rate, the Commission, while showing us pictures of the accident (or rather the damage it inflicted on the street sign--stop sign--on the southeast corner of Patton and 10th) did not give us any details on it.

If, as I believe, Tippit hailed a passerby to ask for information, and was struck at the same time by the man's furtive attitude, he (Tippit) could very well have gotten out of his car, ordering the man to produce some kind of information. If the man was a cheap punk of some kind who was scared gutless by the sirens and excitement in the city over the President's assassination, and if this punk had, say, robbed a grocery store the night before, he could very easily have pulled a gun and shot Tippit down. A thousand questions could have flown through his head. ~~The~~ cop will take me in on a general city dragnet and then I'm for it. The cop recognizes me as a ~~parolee~~ parolee who is off limits, etc. The cop will search me and find that wristwatch I took off that punk in Lover's Lane, etc., etc. There are any number of possibilities. In a city like Dallas, where ~~crime~~ crime is a daily fact of life (particularly in Oak Cliff) Tippit could easily have picked the wrong man to question on a minor accident--without that man being either the assassin or the alleged assassin.

Walker's remarks that Tippit was an acquaintance of his from Austin were never followed up; nor was the possibility explored that Tippit may have been on accident detail that day. He did not, however, have to be on accident detail in order to be pressed into service on such an incident following the confusion and excitement of the assassination. There were plenty of cops filling in on each other's categories at that point.

There is a little dive on Patton (west side, mid-street) called the "Gentleman's Club." You would have to see it to believe it. This is no hangout for the lower class respectable, etc.; this is a joint. In addition, the Patton and 10th Street neighborhood when I saw it for the first time in the first week of February, 1964, was a disgrace. It could have been the area that gave impetus to the Poverty Program! One of the reasons I early disliked George and Pat Nash (alleged sociologist) was that they insisted (George did, to me on the phone) that Patton and 10th was a "nice" neighborhood. Great balls on a duck! Is this what you learn from a sociology course in college! One of my early fights with Vince was over the fatuousness of the Nashes, but you know Vince: in those days the Nashes were "beautiful people" to him; George Nash was a "wonderful guy." (The Nashes also in my opinion made a truly unbelievable deduction on De Mohrenschildt that floored me. I never did understand how people like this could be so allegedly educated and yet grasp so little about life and human nature in generalx.)

At any rate, the 10th Street area has improved immeasurably since my first trip there. The two old empty (?) houses east of 404 are now gone and in their place a truly nice apartment building. There have been renovations all along the line, ~~leaving~~ leaving only a few of the old originals still standing. That this would be a plot or conspiracy by the Oak Cliff city fathers seems unlikely. (I leave this kind of rank speculation to Penn. I am bad enough in my own way!) However, the entire complexion of the street has changed, which could be nothing more than an attempt to benefit by what I suppose is some spin-off on the tourist trade that Dealey Plaza gets. (For example, the Texas Theatre has had a real renovation. You wouldn't know it.)

But we must keep in mind (George Nash or no) what it was, rather than what it is. One block down on 9th and Patton is that ghastly Washateria ~~where~~ ^{where} Helen Markham and her son who was on parole lived. This is typical of the area. As we drove and walked through it the first time, I realized how many of the little shanties no doubt harbored men and women with criminal records ~~who~~ who would have panicked on the day of assassination if they suspected the police were down on them in a general dragnet!

At least, it must be considered. It fits my feeling, too, that this punk would have sighed out: "Poor damn cop" or "Poor dumb cop." Because I think Tippit made it clear before he got out of the car and before his suspicions were aroused, that he was asking for accident information only. But once the man looked sideways (or Tippit discerned the shape of a gun under his jacket) Tippit got out to investigate; and the man had to kill him for fear of what Tippit might ~~discover~~ discover on him.

I must close. Let me know if you have anything more on this. Love, S.