

AT THE TEXAS THEATRE

Statement of Witnesses - Bob K. CARROLL
Depositions -

April 3 and 9, 1964, 7 H 17-26

Carroll's background is similar to that of most of the Dallas police whose testimonies I have read. They are undereducated, quit school, (he didn't finish high school) gravitated to the police department. He is a veteran with ^{over} ~~with~~ 10 years service in the department.

He had been on duty on Main St. during the motorcade, in plain clothes, and he went into a tavern where he saw television, and he immediately called the office. As he reconstructed what happened, based on the 12:30 assassination, he said, "I believe it was approximately 1 o'clock - maybe a little before, but around 1 o'clock, and after I got to the Depository they started organizing search details and I was assigned to search the basement." (p. 12)

Here is the first reference to any kind of an organized search and it is not earlier than 1 o'clock. That is almost a half hour after Brennan, Ewins, and the other witnesses reported having seen a rifle barrel or something similar in the sixth floor window.

Carroll doesn't say ^{who ordered it} /or who was in charge or who was in charge where he was. He merely says, "Well, I went into the basement and we determined that we needed some light in the basement so I came back upstairs to get some light ..." He heard that an officer had been shot in ~~Oak~~ Oak Cliff and called his dispatcher who "stated it was Officer Tippit who was shot and he was dead ..." Carroll could be, and likely is, wrong; but if he is not, the dispatcher knew pretty early about Tippit's death. Unless, of course, this took longer than Carroll indicated

He got permission to go to the scene of the Tippit shooting and was accompanied by K. E. Lyons, a plainclothes patrolman assigned to the special service bureau. They heard the call on the radio directing police to the Texas Theatre and went there. He said of the suspect that

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"we - had more less a vague idea ..." and asked of o the description he said, "They gave me a vague one on teh telephone ... "

But even that he cannot recall. No matter how Ball tries to encourage him to remember anything, he remembers nothing, except that he thinks the age given was between 20 and 25 (p.19).

This is his version of the struggle at the theatre:

"Mr. Ball. I mean, were Oswald and McDonald struggling together?

Mr. Carroll. Yes, sir; and then when I got up close enough, I saw a pistol pointing at me so I reached and grabbed the pistol and jerked the pistol away and stuck it in my belt, and then I grabbed Oswald.

Mr. Ball. Who had hold of that pistol at that time?

Mr. Carroll. I don't know, sir. I just saw the pistol pointing at me and I grabbed it and jerked it away from whoever had it and that's all, and by that time then the handcuffs were put on Oswald."

This is in sharp contradiction to McDonald's version, in which McDonald says he disarmed Oswald and gave the pistol to Carroll.

Carroll is asked if he saw anyone strike Oswald with his fist, and he replied he did not. Ball then says a witness the day before testified he had seen someone hit Oswald in the back with a shotgun. Carroll didn't see that either. (p.20)

Carroll does ~~not~~ ^{concede} "it's possible that someone did (strike him)." Later he admits "I know he had a mark up here, somewhere up here, I believe it was over his left eye - I'm not real sure." (p.21)

Returning to the pistol:

"Mr. Ball. After you took the pistol, what did you do with it?

Mr. Carroll. The pistol?

Mr. Ball. Yes.

Mr. Carroll. After I took the pistol, I stuck it in my belt

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immediately. Then, after we got into the car and pulled out from the theater over there, I gave it to Jerry Hill, Sgt. Jerry Hill." (p.22)

According to Carroll's version, they took Oswald to headquarters where he was immediately turned over to the homicide bureau, and Carroll and the officers accompanying him went into the police personnel office. He specifically lists McDonald among these; while McDonald did not testify when he returned to police headquarters, in context, he implied that he returned at a much later time.

Apparently two of the policemen sustained ^{more}/serious injuries than Oswald did, unless Carroll misrepresents what happened. He said both Lyons and Paul Bentley sprained their ankles.

Again on the pistol:

"Mr. Ball. Had you looked at the pistol to see if it was loaded before you got to the personnel office?

Mr. Carroll. Yes, sir; when I gave it to Jerry Hill, he unloaded it.

Mr. Ball. He unloaded it there in the car?

Mr. Carroll. Yes, sir.

Mr. Ball. And ^{were} you able to see that?

Mr. Carroll. Wait just a minute -- I know he checked the cylinder and I don't recall whether he actually unloaded it at the time or whether he waited to unload it downtown, but I believe he unloaded it there at the car.

Mr. Ball. Anyway, you know it was unloaded in your presence?

Mr. Carroll. Yes; and I saw the bullets." (p.22)

He also says the pistol had six bullets in it.

Whether or not this is in direct contradiction with McDonald's testimony depends upon the "when" which is not asked or stated in this

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series of questions and answers. It is not clarified by the following exchange, which also doesn't state the time:

"Mr. Ball. Was McDonald there at that time?

Mr. Carroll. I don't recall whether he was right there at that moment or not." (p.23)

McDonald testified that he had unloaded the weapon and put his mark on one of the six bullets. Further:

"Mr. Ball. Did you see anything unusual about any one of them?

Mr. Carroll. Not - just at a glance. No, sir; they just looked like bullets.

Mr. Ball. Did you examine them more carefully at a later time?

Mr. Carroll. Someone made mention that one of the caps, you know, had a small indent on it, and I looked at it and I could see what looked to me like a hammer might have fallen on it.

Mr. Ball. On the firing pin?

Mr. Carroll. Yes - the firing pin looked like where the firing pin might have fallen on the cap.

Mr. Ball. It looked like the firing pin had fallen on the cap?

Mr. Carroll. That's right." (p.23)

In the light of Joesten's charge that the firing pin was bent, I think it is significant that Ball did not ask at what point the shell was indented. On the marking of the gun:

"Mr. Ball. Was McDonald there that day?

Mr. Carroll. I'm sure he was - I don't actually recall him sitting there. He was there most of the time.

Mr. Ball. Did you see McDonald make a mark on the gun?

Mr. Carroll. Yes; I saw him make a mark.

Mr. Ball. When was this done?

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Mr. Carroll. It was up in the personnel police office.

Mr. Ball. At this meeting that you were just describing?

Mr. Carroll. Yes; when we were all in there together." (p.23)

It would seem to me that the means by which ~~the~~ the mark was made, the reasons for more than one man making the mark, and a more specific identification of the time are minimum essentials missing here. (p.23)

Carroll was recalled six days later because at the time of his original testimony the pistol was not in the possession of the Commission's examiner, Ball. Belin had it and showed it to Carroll. It is Exhibit 143 and appears on 16 H 513. This seems to be identical with the other views I have seen of this pistol, a single side view with the hammer closed and actually revealing no characteristics of the pistol. Specifically, the points at which Carroll and McDonald said they marked the pistol are not visible. Like McDonald, Carroll was never asked anything about serial numbers. He identifies it as the pistol taken from Oswald at the theatre. He reiterates his earlier version of how he, not McDonald, got the pistol. (p.24)

He likewise repeated the story about giving the pistol to Sgt. Hill on the way downtown with Oswald. He identifies his mark as follows:

"Mr. Belin. Did you put any identification mark at all on this weapon?

Mr. Carroll. Yes, sir; I did. The initials B. C., right above the screw on the inside of the butt of the pistol." (p.25)

Note that when he is finally asked the day, he is still not asked the time he marked the pistol.

He is not asked to reconcile the glaring contradictions between his testimony and that of McDonald. They cannot both be telling the truth.