

Bonner book  
Officer James Chaney

HW 2/23/70

Early (in WW) the absence of Chaney as a witness and the lack of interest in what Baker or Studebaker said he had learned at the Depository compelled my interest in him. I tried to get in touch with him, locate him,

through promoting the interest of Garrison's people,  
Paul Rothermel  
Henry Wade.

The latter two said they had no idea where he was. The Garrison people also said they could not locate him.

Bonner's book is a fictionalization, but it is beyond doubt that the locals considered her book was also their means of self-justification, at least locally, where they could expect it to get some attention. Her reporting is anything but that. However, ever where we know it is inaccurate, I think it would be wrong to assume that everything in it is wrong. For example, in the first of the "12:30" chapters (50), where she says what didn't happen, that the first thing Curry did was hit the gas, she also says that Chaney immediately pulled up beside him, before that very short distance to the underpass, and told him, "The President's been shot! I think his head's blown off!"

This is credible. Perhaps not at the point she indicates, but I would assume it is at least probable. However, we also know this preceded the immediate orders by both Curry and Decker for their men to go to the area west of the depository, not to any of the buildings.

What I am suggesting is that, besides being a close eyewitness of the fatal shot, Chaney also knew where it or some had come from and did not believe this was from behind. Either of these could account for his not being a witness, not being wanted.

Either Bonner and what is more likely, those who fed her their refuse, aware of the problem the logs caused them, gave her the most unlikely explanation for the immediate order to go to the area west of the building. It comes out this way (51): "Both designated the triple underpass because its bridge seemed a logical firing point - and a logical escape route".

Neither is true, but the first is entirely inconsistent with any alleged belief they later claimed to have held immediately, that the shots came from behind them. They knew all bridges were guarded. They saw many people on this own. And the most illogical, the least likely "escape route" for anyone behind them, especially in the depository, was by foot, over railroad tracks, from which there was no speedy means of escape. Going over the bridge also meant going away from the only part of those tracks from which there was not easy exit. It is only on the north side from which one can readily reach the street. And going south meant going to where there would be greatest likelihood of observation, such as from the Terminal Annex post office, two short blocks away.