

POLICE

Deposition of - Chief JESSE E. CURRY, April 15, 1964, 12 H 25-42;
Testimony - April 22, 1964, 4 H 150-202;
Deposition - July 13, 1964, 15 H 124-33;
Affidavit - August 10, 1964, 15 H 641

In his deposition of April 15, Chief Curry tried to disassociate himself as much as the Chief of Police whose police force committed the blunder, if that is what it was, that his did. He tried to pretend that his department works almost automatically through a chain of command in which nobody has to give anybody else orders - a man knows what he is supposed to do and does it. He especially tried to pretend that he had permitted Fritz to, as he normally would have, assume responsibility for Oswald's security, but it is clear from other sources in the report and hearings that Fritz had not assumed any responsibility for Oswald's security.

Curry, questioned by Leon D. Hubert, Jr., Asst. Counsel, traced his early experience. He is an up-from-the-ranks policeman whose previous experience was as a student of optometry, the owner of a small cleaning and pressing plant, and whose first police employment was as a traffic cop. He rose to the highest civil service rank attainable, had a fellowship at Northwestern University Traffic Institute, and graduated the FBI Academy in Washington, and took other educational courses in his field.

On p.28, at the beginning of his account of the events of Nov. 22, he says, with respect to the motorcade, "it was necessary for us to move to Elm Street in order to get on the Stemmons Expressway to get the President's caravan down to the Trade Mart ..."

There are errors in this statement. First, Stemmons Freeway was not the only way and may, indeed, not have been the best way. Second, the only thing that prevented the Presidential motorcade from making a right turn from Elm Street into Stemmons Freeway was a police regulation.

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Such things do not prevent Presidents. He is not asked to explain his broadcast in which he immediately directed attention be paid to the overpass. He describes the security measures that were taken, allegedly to protect Oswald, discusses his and the department's attitude toward the press (with an attitude that makes it seem as though it was law), says he consulted with the district attorney to see if there was anything improper or illegal in presenting Oswald to the media people (p.32), and again comes to the transfer on p.35 where he pretends that a transfer was necessary. His testimony shows no necessity, but refers to a custom. When asked, "When a prisoner^{so} is formally charged, as Oswald has^d been, what is the normal procedure to transfer the prisoner to the state prison?", he replied, "There are two ways it is done. Sometimes the Bureau transfers the person to the sheriff's office, and sometimes the sheriff's office sends i up and gets them." Either one is usual or acceptable. He says that "not at this time," presumably Friday night, Sheriff Decker had made no request that Curry deliver the prisoner. He discusses his exchange with the press about this in a way that, nonetheless, makes it clear he was telling the press Oswald would be transferred after 10 a.m. on Sunday by saying that when they asked him "When should^{we}/be back?" he had "made the remark then, 'I believe if you are back here by 10 o'clock, you will be ba~~ck~~ in time to observe anything you care to observe'." (p.35)

He did not specifically delegate security for Oswald's movement to anybody because he saw on his arrival at the jail on Sunday morning "he was being taken care of by the ^{captain} ~~captan~~ on duty, Captain Talbert ..." (What happened to Capt. Fritz?)" (p.36)

On the question of threats: "Someone asked me if I had heard of the threats that had been made against him, and I had. They had called

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me at home about it, and I called Sheriff Decker, I think, from Fritz' office, and when Fritz said they were ready to transfer the man, and this is something after 11 o'clock - probably a little after 11 $\frac{1}{2}$, and Decker said, 'Okay, bring him on,' and at that time I said, 'I thought you were coming after him.'

Decker said, 'Either way, I'll come after him or you can bring him to me,' and I thought since we had so much involved here, we were the ones that were investigating the case and we had the officers set up downstairs to handle it, so I told Decker - I said, 'Okay, we'll bring him to you'." (pp.36-7)

Again, remember, he was leaving everything up to Fritz? - that's been his consistent story. At the bottom of p.37 he said, "When I went back up into the homicide office and told Fritz about our plans of transferring the prisoner, he was not particularly pleased with the idea of putting the prisoner in the armored car." (p.37) Fritz apparently thought it would be safer to have the prisoner in a more maneuverable vehicle driven by a police officer. (p.38) Thereupon, the improvised plan for moving Oswald - for it was an improvised plan, with the armored car people not being contacted until well into Sunday morning - was subject to further and last-minute improvisation. Curry does not discuss the second version at this point. He said he was on the telephone, having been called by the city manager, when he was informed that Oswald had been killed.

On the subject of telephones, it is conspicuous that Mr. Hubert does not ask Chief Curry whether his phone was out of order, as other police reported on the morning of the Oswald assassination, or why the sheriff's office couldn't get him on the phone early on that morning. These are, in view of the alleged plans, of the sheriff's office, important

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questions, the knowledge was in the possession of the Commission, and there is no normal reason for the oversight.

The Dallas police report of the Oswald killing concluded that Ruby did come down the Main Street ramp. ^{Curry} ~~Fritz~~, nonetheless, insists proper security measures were taken (p.39). But once again he says he left "when and how" of the transfer up to Capt. Fritz. Perhaps he did leave the "when" but elsewhere, and even in his own testimony just quoted it is clear the "how" was not left up to Capt. Fritz.

He thinks security broke down because Officer Vaughn left his post, although for what seemed to be for him a good motive. (p.40) He is shown, reads, and agrees to the accuracy of 2 FBI reports on interviews with him, Exhibits ~~51~~ 5313 and 5314, (pp.40-1). These appear in Vol. XIX, pp.406-9. I believe they have been summarized and analyzed elsewhere. They contain the customary self-serving statements by Curry and if not actually completely and 100 percent false, they certainly border on it. For example, on p.406, Curry is quoted as saying that "Fritz told him he planned to remove Oswald sometime during the following day to the Dallas County Jail." It is clear that Fritz knew nothing about any plans for moving Oswald at all. When he finally learned about them the morning of the 24th, he protested them. On the same page Curry is quoted as having stated "...he had no knowledge as to whether or not Fritz had to change his plans at any time."

This page also includes the clearly misleading representation, if not outright false statement, about whether or not the news media were informed of the plans to move Oswald, and the time.

The last paragraph of this exhibit on p.407 says, "Chief Curry related that the Deputy Chief, N. T. Fisher, had instructed Captain Cecil Talbert of the Radio Patrol Division to make certain that the

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proper security was set up in the basement of the Dallas police building." What happened to Fritz's responsibility, Curry's story that Fritz was in charge?

Note I am suspending the analysis of Curry's testimony and may or may not complete it.