

At The Bank Depository

Statements of Witnesses - D. V. HARKNESS
Deposition -

April 9, 1964, 6 H 308-15

He is a sergeant with over 17 years of experience whose duty on the day of the assassination was supervising the traffic officers from Main and Field to Elm and Houston. He was at Main and Houston at 12:30. He heard 3 shots when he was on the west side of Houston St. He knew they were shots. He said he saw the President's car "slow down to almost a stop" when the first shot was fired and he returned to the street to get his motorcycle. He couldn't identify the source of the shots because of the reverberations. He is not asked if he examined the building, and from his description of his position, he should have had an excellent view of the entire south side. (p.309)

He went to Industrial Blvd. To see "if I could see anyone fleeing that area." He returned to the Depository. Here he found or was found by Amos Euins, "who told me he saw the shots come from that building."

Note this:

"Mr. Harkness. After I took his name and address and put this information on the radio, I then took him on the back of my three-wheel motorcycle and put him in Inspector Sawyer's car.

Mr. Belin. Now you mentioned that you put something on the radio, here, and I hand you here what has been marked as Sawyer Deposition Exhibit A. Before doing that, do you remember what call number you used, you were using that day?

Mr. Harkness. I believe 260.

Mr. Belin. Well, I notice here that there is a call with a notation of 12:36 p.m., 260 to 531. 531 is your office in the main station?

Mr. Harkness. Yes, sir.

Mr. Belin. What does it say there on that transcript?

Mr. Harkness. 'Witness says shots came from fifth floor, Texas

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Book Depository store at Houston and Elm. I have him with me now and we are sealing off the building." (p.310)

There are two things I want to point out: First, that Sawyer was not at the building at 12:36 and, as Harkness admits in the next series of exchanges, the building had not at that time been sealed off. (p.310)

When asked how soon after 12:36 the building was sealed off, Harkness replied, "It was sealed off because I was back there and two other men," referring to the rear of the building. He is not asked anything about the overhead doors. He does not state where he and the other men were standing. These doors are on two different walls. The mere fact that he was behind the building does not, in any sense, mean the building was sealed. But from his own statement, he didn't go to the back of the building until after Insp. Sawyer's car had arrived and, presumably, until after Insp. Sawyer had had ample time to leave it. This was later than 12:36.

When Belin tries to lead him away from this by suggesting Harkness had been to the rear of the building first, Harkness corrects him to say that he was in the front of the building until after he deposited Euins in Insp. Sawyer's car. Harkness said of Sawyer, "he was standing there in front taking information. All the information was being funneled to Inspector Sawyer." (p.311)

Harkness didn't go around to the back of the building until after Insp. Sawyer had posted 2 men in the front. Harkness admits he doesn't know whether or not people were at that time entering and/or leaving the building. In the back of the building he found, "there were some Secret Service agents there. I didn't get them identified. They told me they were Secret Service."

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This odd method of recognizing Secret Service agents did not impress itself upon Belin. It then turns out that Harkness was apparently alone behind the building until he was relieved by "the squad" which seems to be a reference to 2 policemen in a car. He then returned to the front where Sawyer assigned him "to some freight cars that were leaving out of the yard, to go down and search all freight cars that were leaving the yard."

It would be interesting to know if any trains, especially ^{of} freight cars, had already left that area in this considerable interval. They pulled an unspecified (and unasked) number of "tramps and hoboes" off a long freight standing there. There was no indication Harkness ever stopped or got to the freight cars that he said were leaving. The arrested people were taken to the station and released after questioning.

Belin then turns to ~~Euins~~ ^{Euins} and Harkness said Euins was pointed out to him when he asked the crowd if anyone had seen where the shots came from. (p.312)

Belin questioned Harkness a little bit more closely than he generally questions witnesses about where the ledge on the Book Depository is. He specifically tells Harkness not to guess if he doesn't know. Harkness says, "I have been by the place a million times," and he correctly identifies the location of the ledge as above the 6th floor. When confronted with the deposition quoting the witness as saying "shots came from fifth floor", Harkness reiterates that "He said it was from the fifth floor." In the next sentence, when asked the witness's exact words, Harkness quotes them as "'It was under the ledge,' which would put it on the sixth floor. It was my error in a hasty count of the floors."

Whether the error was Harkness's or Euins', Harkness seems to have been flustered and evasive. Asked, "Were you standing at the time, on

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the north or south side of Elm when you talked to this witness?", Harkness replied, "I was." It would seem unlikely that Harkness didn't know there was only a north and a south side. Belin repeated the question and finally, after a few more ~~exchanges~~ exchanges, it is left to seem as though Harkness was in or near the island formed by the 2 sections of Elm Street. He also is asked, "Would you have been west of the School Book Depository Building at that time?" and he responds affirmatively. I don't recall any indication from Harkness of where he was with respect to an easterly or westerly direction, but he apparently was satisfied that that^{is}/what Belin seemed to want. It would not seem to be the most likely place, and from his description of what he did with Euins, it would seem he was closer to the eastern part of the building. (p.313)

Harkness also spoke to Arnold Rowland.

It does seem odd that where, on p.310, Harkness drew his little notebook out of his pocket and claimed to be reading from the original notes he made at the time he spoke to Euins, he is not asked if there is a record of anything except Euins' name and address. It would seem obvious, especially since Belin knew the inaccuracy in Harkness's broadcast, to have asked if Harkness had anything else recorded.

He saw Ruby on Saturday near the entrance to the county jail and after hearing over the radio of Oswald's death while he and his family were out of town on Sunday, Harkness phoned this information to Fritz.

Although the Commission had information from people who overheard the conversation that Euins had told Harkness the man Euins saw at the window was a Negro, this exchange occurs without any questioning or reference to the other Commission information by Belin:

"Mr. Belin. By the way, did your witness ever say whether the

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person he saw at the window was a white man or Negro?

Mr. Harkness. He just told me, he just said he couldn't identify him. That is what he told me." (p.314)

At the end Harkness reveals his conception of the function of a witness when he said, "I just hope I have been able to help you ... complicated to give directions, especially when you try to convince." (p.315) It would seem he should have no interest in convincing.