

Robert MacNeil  
544 East 86th Street  
New York, N. Y. 10028

As from: British Broadcasting Corp  
Care: "Panorama,"  
Lime Grove Studios,  
London, W.12,  
ENGLAND.

Miss Victoria Harris,  
Station K.F.R.M.,  
316 S. Broadway,  
Salina, Kansas,  
USA.

Dear Miss Harris,

I will do my best to clear up your  
confusion.

Manchester <sup>they</sup> drew ~~the~~ information from a state-  
ment I made to the FBI a few days after the assassination  
and from a telephoned interview with me.

(I am typing on a battered borrowed  
portable on a ship on the way to England. The  
spacing mechanism is tempermental and the table  
not too steady).

Let me tell you my account of what happened,  
based not on memories nearly four years old but on  
a full account which I wrote for myself a few days  
after the weekend of the assassination.

When the shots were fired, I was in the first  
of two press buses about seven or eight cars behind  
the President's limousine. Our bus was just about to  
turn the corner to the left and was headed towards the  
Book Depository when the shots were fired. After a  
few seconds of doubting that they were shots, I ran to  
the front, asked the driver to stop and open the door.  
He did and I got out. The air was filled with the  
sound of many people screaming in unision. I ran around  
the corner so as to see the President but his car had  
disappeared under the underpass. I did not know he had  
been hit but supposed that some political extremist had  
merely wanted to stage a demonstration by firing a gun.

Several people were running up the grassy  
knoll towards the railroad tracks on the overpass. I  
thought they must have seen the gunman and I ran with  
them. We were joined by plain clothes police who pulled  
out pistols. We climbed the fence at the top of the knoll  
and found ourselves on the tracks. There was no gunman  
in sight. As those with me looked rather aimless, I felt  
I should report what I knew to NBC so I ran to look for a

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Miss ~~Virginia~~ Harris

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phone. The first building which looked as if it might have one was the Book Depository. I ran in and just inside the entrance found a young man who I remember only vaguely. (You must realize that I then had no reason to suspect that that building was implicated in the shooting and I was totally preoccupied with the urgent business of finding a phone). I asked the young man and he said: "You'd better ask him," pointing to another young man standing farther back in the ground floor room. I asked the second man and he pointed to a phone in a nearby office.

I called NBC collect and gave them what I knew... that shots had been fired as the Kennedy motorcade went through downtown Dallas. In the confusion, the collect charge was never formally accepted by the NBC operator and the Dallas operator, checking on the charge a few days later, gave NBC the time of the call as 12: 34, i.e., roughly four minutes after the shooting. I hung up and ran outside and met a motorcycle policeman just pulling up who told me that he had heard on his radio that Kennedy was badly wounded and being taken to Parkland Hospital. At the same time a negro boy told the policeman that he had seen shots fired from an upstairs window in the Depository. Very agitated that I might have missed the most important story (the condition of the President) by leaving the press bus, I ran desperately looking for a taxi to get to the hospital. Traffic was jammed in all directions. Two streets away it was still moving. I ran in front of the first car that came along, made it stop, got in and gave the man \$10. to take me to the hospital. At my urging he ignored all red lights and traffic rules. On the way I stopped at a gas station to call NBC again to give them the information that Kennedy had been wounded but was still able to get to Parkland Hospital just as the press bus (which had been delayed since I left it) was arriving. I was able to find a pay phone immediately and kept it for the afternoon, reporting on what happened at the hospital.

Now, as for Manchester: I told him precisely what I have told you. I was not able, even a few hours after the event, to form any detailed mental picture of either of the young men I accosted in the Depository. In general, you do not register details which are outside your field of attention at any given moment. In the interview, Manchester pointed out to me that included in the FBI report is a summarized account by a Secret Service agent of one of the Oswald interrogation sessions in Dallas police headquarters. In it, Oswald said that as he left the Depository a young man with a crew cut who he thought was a Secret Serviceman ran up to him, showed him SS identification,

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and asked for a phone. He pointed out a pay phone and saw the man go to it. Manchester said he was 95% convinced, having been all over the ground, that I was the man Oswald meant.

There are some discrepancies however: I do not have a "crew cut;" I did not "show" any identification but was wearing a fairly conspicuous badge saying "White House Press;" the phone I was shown to was not a pay phone but an office phone.

Manchester evidently satisfied himself on these points enough to purge his 5% of uncertainty and, as you know, states flatly in the book that it was I. All I can say is that it could have been.

You are not the only person to wonder about it. I hope this account will be of some help. I'm afraid I cannot account for your friend. It is perfectly possible that we both were there at the same time. I would like to hear his account.

Sincerely,

*Robert MacNeil*  
Robert MacNeil

August 22, 1967.

I apologize again for the messy typing