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T R I P

June 7, 1964

Saturday, June 6, 1964:

Flew from Kent County Airport to Dallas, Texas (Love Field) with Air Force plane from SAM fleet. Left at 11:45 p.m. Grand Rapids time and arrived two hours later. Met at airport by Secret Service agent who drove me to Sheraton-Hilton Hotel for the night.

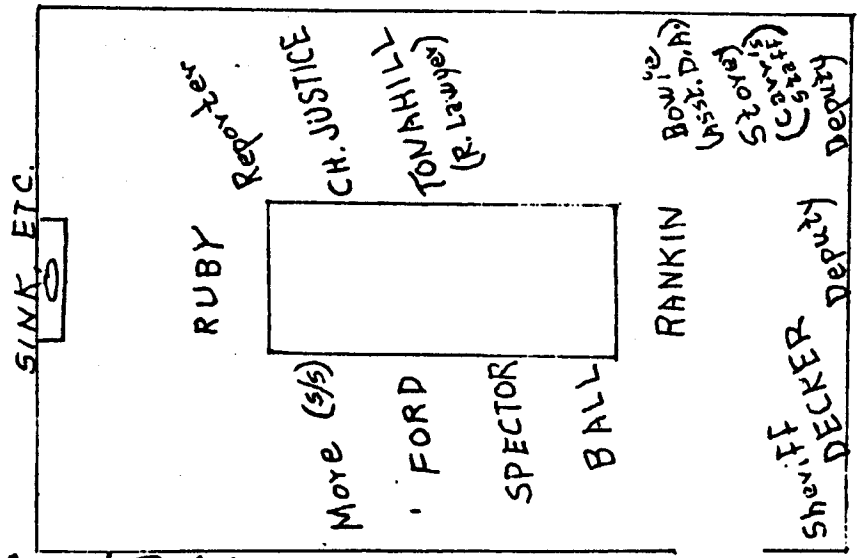
Sunday, June 7, 1964:

Met at Statler-Hilton by Secret Service Agent Wolferd at 8:00 a.m. who drove me to Hensley Field (N.A.S.) where we met Chief Justice Warren, Rankin, Ball, Spector.

Drove to Texas School Book Depositary building where the group was met by Mr. Truly and several Secret Service personnel. We were shown the TSBD from top to bottom. Chief Justice and I with stop watch in hand followed Oswald's course from 6th floor window to exit down and out the front door. At 6th floor window sighted motorcade course with rifle. Went to 5th floor and knelt in window under O. while shells were ejected above. Followed course of Jarman and others on 5th floor after assassination. Also took course of Truly and Officer Baker from front of TSBD to 2nd floor and lunchroom scene.

By this time the "press" had assembled outside TSBD. ChJ. and I went out rear exit and got in car as "press" tried to question and take pictures. Driven by Secret Service to Sheriff Decker's headquarters across the street where he greeted us while we waited for a court reporter.

11:45 AM: Our party went to an upper floor in the police headquarters where juries are kept during a criminal proceeding. The room set aside for the Ruby interrogation was apparently a small kitchen and eating quarters for the jurors. It is about 10 ft. x 18 ft. Very austere surroundings. Table in center of room about 3 ft. x 8 ft. Chair set up for R. at one end with his back to the sink and kitchen facilities.



On display at Ford Museum

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

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R. brought in by Sh.D. and his two deputies, introduced to our party. R. dressed in white jumper with top several buttons open; thong sandals(zories). Said he wanted to tell "his story." Sat nervously with hands fumbling with a small piece of Kleenex and a rubber band.

After an initial statement by R. he was sworn by the ChJ. R. started his story on Thursday night, November 21st. All of us were most apprehensive as to what he might do or say, but although nervous and a bit random he did quite well. Despite his statement that Tonahill wasn't his attorney he seemed friendly and appeared to have confidence in him.

Everything seemed to go well for about 45 minutes. (R. had gotten in his story to about 2 a.m. November 23rd where he was describing a meeting on a street with Police Officer Olson and a "gal.") When T. wrote something on a pad R. asked to see what T. had written. R. borrowed T's glasses to read and after reading the note R. was very upset. Appeared to be ready to quit testimony because of T's note. T. had written on the note that the officer and the "gal" had probably by their comments motivated R's subsequent action. The officer and the "gal" had said at the meeting that someone ought to take violent action against O.

For the next 30 minutes it was "touch and go" whether R. would continue his testimony. ChJ. tried to be reassuring and was very patient in his cajoling. Finally Sh.D. spoke up forcefully and in a loud voice told R. to be a "man" and talk because all of these men had come 2000 miles to hear his testimony at his request. ShD. volunteered to leave with his deputies and eventually R. said he wanted them to go which they did. Terribly tense. Finally R. started to testify again and gradually gave us most of his story. After about 2 hours, ChJ., Rankin and I asked a number of questions.

R. at the very outset of the hearing requested polygraph tests and truth serums. ChJ. made a commitment that this would be done. R. also wanted to go to Washington, D.C. with the group to tell his story to LBJ.

R. alleges he had no thought of killing O. until Sunday morning when he read a newspaper that had a "letter" to Caroline from some person and more particularly a statement that Mrs. Kennedy would have to come back to Dallas to testify at the O. trial.

Spector of our staff not included in the hearing at first. After about 30 minutes I spoke to Joe Ball and said it was a shame S. was not included. I wrote a note to ChJ. suggesting S. be brought in. ChJ. didn't agree at first but just before R. "blow up" there was an opening and the ChJ. suggested that S. come in to the hearing.

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S. presence later was important because toward the end R. started to make allegations that he would probably be killed and his family injured (brother and sisters) by John Birch organization. R. inferred this would be persecution because he was Jewish. R. believed S. was Jewish (I think he is) and this seemed to give him confidence to continue testifying.

Hearing finally terminated after 3 hours. Before breaking up ChJ., Spector and R. moved to a corner of the room and talked about 5 minutes.

Party then went down to the exit of the building to leave by the Secret Service car. Very large crowd and "press" surrounding the exit. Finally got through and our party of 3 cars then drove to Dean Storey's for lunch (ChJ., Rankin, Ball, Spector, myself and Storey).

On leaving Storey's apartment (where we thought we had eluded the "press") we were met at the apartment entrance by several photographers and reporters. Finally got to the cars and started to drive from TSBD the route that O. followed following the assassination. Thought we had eluded TV and Press but they picked us up at O. rooming house. ChJ. and I wanted to go in to see the room he last occupied but ChJ. wouldn't get out of the car with the Press and TV waiting to interrogate us. We then continued route of O. path to T. shooting, theater, and other apartments and spots of interest.

Party then broke up with Ball and me going to Love Field and ChJ. and his party going back to Hensley Field. S.S.Agent Wolferd drove me to SAM aircraft and we flew back to Grand Rapids leaving at 6:53 p.m. (Dallas time) and arriving in Grand Rapids 2 hours later.

Probably the most fascinating and dramatic 3 hours of the entire Warren Commission proceeding. R. was surprisingly rational and quite composed -- certainly far different acting than psychiatric reports I had read before the trip. Remembers names extremely well. Clean-shaven, balding, hawk-nosed, big hands and feet for a small, slight person. Index finger on left hand half off. Has a habit to look right at you for a period -- hard to know what he is thinking.

During the hearing he was on some occasions most amusing in his comments to the ChJ. or in his way of addressing him.