COX TV

TRANSCRIPT

WSB-TV News

Cameraman RUSSELL - WINDER - O'DELL

Writer AUGUST 18, 1969 - Reel #22

Date September 18, 1969 - Page #1

VIDEO AUDIO

HAL (cont'd): was he too...

RUSSELL: No, he had a better idea than that. They may have beeen some details that he didn't know but it wouldn't have been anything that momentous that would have escaped him. Not only that but the man that misled him about it woul have departed the scene..

HAL: quickly..quickly..

RUSSELL: rather rapiedly.

HAL: I'm not trying to pick any one specific thing but let's say the investigation into the Kennedy assassination. Fo you ~~xxxxxxx~~ that he was right in picking the ~~xxxxxxx~~ busy men he picked to actually probe into it, sir?

RUSSELL: Well, very frankly, he called me over the phone and talked to me about that. And he told me he was thinking about appointing Chief Justice Warren and I advised him very -as strongly as I could- against it. And he said I've got to have an outstanding Judge. I said well, appoint Judge Medina. He's retired and he's just tried all these _____ up there in New York and he said I'm gonna appoint you, And I said no you're not. You won't appoint me - I won't serve - I just won't take it. But he passed that over and we went to talking about others and we agreed rather rapidly on Dulles and I can't remember whether he told me about McCoy - We didn't discuss all of them. But the - when he called me later that night and told me he had appointed me. He said well, I've got the commission here and I want to

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ed in the collections of any institution or individual.

Cameraman RUSSELL - WINDER - O[illegible]

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VIDEO	AUDIO
	RUSSELL (cont'd): ...ead the names. He says, Chairman - Warren.

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Cameraman RUSSELL -- WINDER -- O'DELL

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VIDEO	AUDIO
	HAL: I've got a telephone in the car so if it gets tight I can tell them. No, Moerner's missing, ain't he?..... I've got to talk to. Everybody has something - they make them share the load you know. We were talking a few minutes ago about the appointment of the Warren Commission and your service on it and the fact that so many of the men were heavily loaded when they undertook this task. There were also reports at the time that there was an effort to get it out in a hurry from a political standpoint. Do you believe this?
	RUSSELL: I don't think it was a political standpoint. I do think that all the members of the Commission were very anxious to get it off their shoulders and the Chief Justice who was Chairman did set a deadline, well, he set two or three deadlines as a matter of fact. It became apparent they couldn't meet the first one so they set another one and that one had to be dropped. The - I was badly overloaded. Undoubedtly moreso than any man on the Commission at that time we were in the midst of a very long education campaign that many people called a filibuster on the Civil Rights Bill. I was supposed to be in charge of it on the floor and trying to look after that and also look after my duties on the Warren Commission which was the most arduous four or five months I've ever had in my life and I've had some tough ones.
	HAL: Do you feel like more time should have been taken on the report?

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VIDEO AUDIO

RUSSELL: I don't think it would have hurt anything if we had waited two or three months and digested that report a little more thoroughly and I have never been completely satisfied with the report. Now ~~xx~~ I don't mean by that that I think there was any great omission but I do think it could have been made much more convincing with the evidence we had had it been tied more closely together. The - in the first place, Marian Oswald was never examined as she should have been. I gave her about 40 minutes of cross-examination in Dallas right before the end of the hearings which was really the first that she had had. Chief Justice Warren who was Chief Justice, but he rather took the grandfather toward her when she was before the Commision and Mr. Rankin was not very vigorous. I don't know just what else they could have brought out but I was not satisified with several aspects of the report, but as far as the general conclusion is concerned that Oswald was the man who fired the shots and he acted alone, I think that any other Commission that you might appoint today would arrive at that conclusion. Now there are a number of other things in~~xx~~ it that might come out differently.

HAL: Now what do you thing about the fact that some records the American people aren't going to see for a great number of years?

RUSSELL: Well, they have ~~x~~ to do almost all together with the autopsy on the President. That's the - I don't think ther's anything there - it's just of a technical nature

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VIDEO	AUDIO

RUSSELL (cont'd); that would change the report in any degree.

HAL: The only other papers that I can really think of are the so-called CIA report that ~~[illegible]~~ his - any time he might have spent in Mexico City and remember I use the term might.

RUSSELL: Yes, but that was avilable to us.

HAL: To the public.

RUSSELL: No, it was not made available to the public because there was some international complications. The Mexicans as you well know have always been rather suspicious of us and they have never withdrawn their recoginition from Cuba. Their ties with Cuba are very close today. Castro and Mexico. And I think that caused a commitment to be made that any evidence that might relate to Oswald's efforts to go to Cuba would not be disclosed. That's just my idea about it.

HAL: Let me....

RUSSELL: I have never believed that Oswald planned that all together by ~~m~~ himself. There were too many things - the fact when he was at Minsk (sp???) and that was the principal center for educating Cuban students, there were 600 or 700 there he was very close to some of them and some of the trips that he made to Mexico City and a number of discrepancies in the evidence as to for conflicts in the evidence as to his means of transportation, the luggage he had and whether or not anyone was with ~~him~~ caused me to

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AUDIO

RUSSELL (cont'd): doubt that he planned it all by himself. I think someone else worked with him.

HAL: I was going to ask you, did you then.....

RUSSELL: And I refused to sign the report until they put in the clause, I had drawn a much stronger... ...but I finally agreed to sign if they would put a clause in there that we had exhausted all the evidence that was available to us and that any evidence that might disclosure a conspiracy was beyond the jurisdiction of our police bodies, the FBI and the Secret Service.

HAL: What you're saying then is that Oswald's motives might not have just personal. They might have been politically motivated?

RUSSELL: Oh, I don't think they were personal at all. I think - the fact that - you recall there were so many circumstances one of them being that he was free Cuban - a defender of Cuba and went on the radio in New Orleans and got out pamphlets and handed them out on the streets and there were so many circumstances there that led me to believe that you couldn't just completely eliminate the possibility that he did have some co-consiprators.

HAL: This may be an unfair question and you may not want to answer it. Are you then implying that he could have possibly accepted this as an assignment then many months earlier?

RUSSELL: He could have felt to that degree. I don't think Oswald was a completely normal person. At one time he

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RUSSELL (cont'd): was a rampant Communist and he had lived after in Russia for a while and he had claimed that he had changed his mind.....

I'm not prepared to say because we didn't have enough evidence to pin it down. But I am not completely satisfied in my own mind that ~~xxxxx~~ he did plan and commit this act ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ altogether on his own without consultation ~~xxxxx~~ with anyone else. And that was what the majority of the Commission wanted to find.

HAL: Going back to an earlier subject that we were on for just a minute - the presidency is a terribly ~~xxx~~ lonely place in many ways.

RUSSELL: It is indeed.

HAL: And regardless of who is in that seat they must suffer from this. Did President Johnson ever reflect much of this to you?

RUSSELL: Yes, he did. He reflected a good deal of it. Of course the President, before he was president .....

.....but President Johnson was a lonely man and - I know because he'd call me sometimes later in the afternoon - he knew I stayed in the office late - I very seldom leave the office before 7:00 ~~xxx~~ o'clock and sometimes it's much later - and he'd call me and say come on down here by the White House and have supper with me. And he'd be there perhaps with just Lady Bird, Mrs. Johnson, and I would often go by and have supper with him. He liked to have someone there that he felt he could talk to very freely on any

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