

Interview with
RICHARD SPRAGUE with JAMES ALKINS, AP Photographer

On January 13, 1968, Mr. RICHARD SPRAGUE interviewed JAMES ALKINS and Associated Press photographer in Dallas, Texas. JAMES ALKINS had taken several photographs which are extremely well known in the case of the assassination of President Kennedy. SPRAGUE discovered that ALKINS had taken four pictures which were never printed by the Warren Commission in either the exhibits or released in any other publication. These photographs will be sent by Mr. SPRAGUE to the office. ALKINS' story about his interview with the FBI on behalf of the Warren Commission is as follows:

ALKINS stated that in the Summer of 1964 he was visited by FBI agents who wanted to interview him as a witness of the assassination. ALKINS first inquired as to why it had taken them so long to come to get a statement. The FBI agents who were there to interview him explained that they had used his picture for their investigation and had identified every person shown in the picture, and had gone on to interview those persons identified in the famous picture taken by ALKINS at the time of the shot which caused President Kennedy to bring his hands up to his neck, but they said they had forgotten to interview the photographer and were just coming to that now. "Now" at that time was the Summer of 1964. ALKINS stated that as the motorcade approached Dealey Plaza he was standing at the corner of Houston and Maine Streets and before the motorcade had gotten very near Dealey Plaza, he witnessed a young boy of 19 years, have an epileptic seizure. This boy was near the reflecting pool which is parallel to Houston Street, between Elm and Maine Streets. ALKINS stated that he had heard the possibility of this being a diversionary tactic for the benefit of the conspirators to draw attention away from the grassy knoll, but he felt that this was incorrect because he said that the result of the epileptic seizure was only to have two policemen come over and hold the boy down until an ambulance could arrive. An ambulance did arrive and the boy was placed in the ambulance. Just about the time that the ambulance passed under the triple underpass on Elm Street, President Kennedy's car rounded the corner at Maine and Houston Streets.

The FBI agents told ALKINS that WESLEY J. BENTON was to have interviewed him but that he was unable to be there at that time.

SPRAGUE further related ALKINS' story about his interview with the FBI. The only thing which ALKINS had to add in addition to his testimony before the FBI agents, which is in the 26 volumes, is the story about the boy who had had the epileptic seizure. The FBI agents told him (ALKINS) that when the ambulance reached Parkland Hospital the young boy said that he was perfectly all right, that he had totally recovered from his seizure, and that he desired no medical attention. He promptly jumped out of the ambulance and ran off. The agents said that days later they were able to locate the boy taking his name and his address.

TOM BETHELL has told me that the name of this boy was JERRY BELKNAP. The references in the volumes are CE 1358; CE 1974 (Radio Log) (page 15-17); SAWYER Exhibit page 399. There is an FBI report in the National Archives which gives the name JERRY BELKNAP as the boy having had the seizure. SPRAGUE indicated his suspicion of the peculiarity of the boy's actions upon arriving at Parkland Hospital. He further speculated that the possibility might be that the boy had gone there on the pretense of having had an epileptic fit in order to do something at the hospital, which SPRAGUE thought might possibly be to plant CE 399, which was later found between the mattress of the stretcher and the metal portion of the stretcher.