

*from 2/26/96 deposition of R. J. Thornton
Browell before Ass'n Records Release Board*

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1 the clothes. He showed us the Zapruder film a
2 couple of times. That's all I can remember,
3 although it seemed like an awful lot of times we
4 met with him.

5 Q Did he ever suggest to you that you change
6 any of your testimony or to report something
7 different from how you understood it?

8 A No.

9 Q Were you aware of any other person making
10 a contact with you in relationship to the Warren
11 Commission who suggested that you change your
12 testimony in any way to correspond with any other
13 ideas they might have?

14 A No.

15 Q Very early on in your deposition today,
16 you made reference to Mr. Eardley from the Justice
17 Department asking you to go to New Orleans; is that
18 correct?

19 A Mm-hmm.

20 Q What did he say to you about the reason he
21 wanted you to go to New Orleans?

22 A He was really upset. He says, "J, we got

Eardley

1 to get somebody in New Orleans quick. Pierre is
2 testifying, and he's really lousing everything up."
3 And I called Jim to see if he didn't want to go,
4 and he was having--his mother-in-law was ill, and
5 he couldn't go. So they put me on a plane that day
6 and took me to New Orleans, and that was one of the
7 most interesting adventures of my life. I met--do
8 you want to hear all of this?

9 Q Yes, please.

10 A Carl Eardley sent me to a hotel, and I
11 went into the hotel and registered. I was already
12 registered. I got up to my room, and there was a
13 note on my bedside table telling me to meet
14 somebody at a certain place at a certain time. And
15 this was a scary place. This was down around the
16 wharfs, and the federal attorney's office was in a
17 big warehouse down there. And that's--I met
18 somebody on the street. He took me in there, and
19 then they told me what was going on. They showed me
20 the transcript of Pierre's testimony for the past
21 couple of days, and I spent all night reviewing
22 that testimony. And it was this bit about the

1 general. Jim said, "Who's in charge here?" And
2 when they asked Pierre in court who supervised and
3 ran the autopsy, he says, "Some Army general." And
4 so that is why--and I never appeared. I spent two
5 days down there and then came home, never appeared
6 in court. And the government won their case.

7 Q Actually, the government was the district
8 attorney. So my next question for you actually
9 was: What was the United States Department of
10 Justice doing in relationship to a case between the
11 district attorney of New Orleans and a resident of
12 New Orleans?

13 A Well, they--I went over and met somebody,
14 some lawyer in another firm that night, and I don't
15 know who he was representing. But, obviously, the
16 federal attorney was on the side of Clay Shaw
17 against the district attorney.

18 Q Do you remember the name of that federal
19 attorney?

20 A No. I have no idea.

21 Q Was it Harry Connick?

22 A It could very well have been. That name

1 sounds--of course, Connick is not an uncommon name.
2 It could have been.

3 Q Do you recall meeting with an attorney
4 named Wegman?

5 A No.

6 Q Or Dymond?

7 A Thirty years ago, no, I can't remember
8 that.

9 Q What did the government attorney say to
10 you? Did he help prepare potential testimony for
11 you?

12 A They were getting ready to. I guess it
13 all depended on what Pierre did that next day or
14 something. I don't know. All I know is that they-
15 -he was answering in very strange ways their
16 questions, and, yes, they sent me down and talked
17 to me and tried to get me to agree that he was very
18 strange and that I could do a better job or
19 something.

20 Q Did you ever talk to Dr. Finck about his
21 testimony?

22 A No.

1 Q Did you ever talk to him at all after that
2 point?

3 A Oh, yes, many times. Pierre's wife was
4 there with him, and he was staying in the same
5 hotel I was. And so we met just by chance at
6 breakfast the day after I arrived. And we didn't
7 discuss why I was there. I'm sure he asked me, and
8 I don't know what I told him. But, anyway, we have
9 met on a number of occasions since then. His
10 daughter is in this country, and she was going to
11 school in Missouri for several years. And I used
12 to--they'd stop by here and visit with us as they
13 were on their way. We were very good friends.

14 Q Do you have any idea why he was answering
15 the questions the way he was in the Clay Shaw
16 trial?

17 A Well, you'll know when you meet him, if
18 and when you meet him. He is a very strange--but a
19 sharp guy. He was a good pathologist, a hard
20 worker. He was devoted to the United States and to
21 the Army despite the fact that he was going back
22 home. But he's a strange guy. I knew that long

1 before we invited him over to help us on this
2 autopsy. He's just a strange fellow.

3 Q Do you recall who paid for your trip to go
4 to New Orleans?

5 A I would assume that the Justice Department
6 provided my plane tickets and my hotel bill.

7 Q Other than for this experience in New
8 Orleans, were you contacted at any other point by
9 any representative of the U.S. Government to
10 provide assistance for the government in regard to
11 the Kennedy autopsy?

12 A No. But aside from that, Carl Eardley
13 called me when King was assassinated and said, "J,
14 we got a problem down in Memphis. They're alleging
15 that we're letting the Reverend die." And then he
16 called me back and said, "He died. Would you go
17 down there and supervise the autopsy?" And I said
18 I'm the last--by this time, it had been several
19 years, and we'd had an awful lot of stuff about the
20 autopsy. And so I said, "I'm the last one you want
21 to go down." And I gave him the name of the guy
22 who was at that time the neuropathologist--I knew

1 what they were going to find because he had been
2 shot in the neck and the spinal cord was severed.
3 And I gave him the name of the neuropathologist at
4 the AFIP, and he called him and got him to go.

5 That's the only other incident relative to
6 that.

7 Q Earlier in the deposition, you made
8 reference to a letter that you sent, I believe to
9 Mr. Eardley, suggesting that a panel be created to
10 review some of the autopsy material. Could you
11 describe for me what circumstances led to your
12 writing that letter?

13 A This was--had to be '68, maybe. I'm not
14 sure when it was. And he just called me out of the
15 blue and said he thought it was a good idea--said
16 they thought it was a good idea to have an
17 independent panel. I believe that's what it was.

18 Now, I had been talking about this with
19 perhaps him and other people, Jim particularly,
20 that now that all the material was back, that it
21 should be reviewed, if they're not going to. And
22 whether Carl suggested it or whether I convinced