

INTERROGATIONS OF OSWALD - POSTAL INSPECTOR

Statements of Witnesses - Harry D. HOLMES

Deposition - April 2, 1964, 7 H 289-308

Deposition - July 23, 1964, 7 H 525-30

Holmes is a veteran employee stationed in Dallas. His office is 2 blocks away from the assassination scene. It is on the opposite side of Dealey Plaza and looking from his window on the fifth floor he could see the assassination scene. (p.290)

He was viewing the motorcade with $7\frac{1}{2}$ x 50 binoculars. ~~Holmes~~ ^{Holmes} is one of a number of witnesses, including Depository employees, who said that after the shots the Presidential car came to a halt or almost to a halt. His observation confirms the sheriff's deputies especially in that he saw most of the officers rush to the area to the west of the Book Depository Building. (p.291)

Describing himself as "a trained suspicioner", he said after looking at the area for a long period of time after the shooting he saw nothing suspicious.

His connection with the assassination investigation was such that "I didn't get to bed for two days." He even had the building in which he was located "shaken out".

Shortly after the radio reports started coming in, an employee informed Holmes that Oswald had rented a postal box, No. 6225. Holmes obtained the original application and later turned it over to the FBI. He marked it to identify it the day of the assassination. (p.292)

From the time of the assassination until after Oswald was shot, the box was kept under 24-hour surveillance. Rental expired Dec. 31.

Only one key was given out. (p.293)

He helped the FBI locate the money order used for the purchase of the weapons.

They traced the money order and with the ^{records at K} Klein's Sporting Goods

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found the rifle had been shipped to Box 2915, Dallas Main Post Office, which Oswald had rented prior to his move to New Orleans. (p.295)

He continues to detail the steps in his investigation. (p.296)
He participated in the last interrogation of Oswald, at Capt. Fritz's invitation. (Remember Fritz and his protest about how many too many people were in his office but he couldn't chase them out?) His statement about this interrogation was dictated 4 weeks later, Dec. 17, 1963. He had a few notes. When the FBI asked him for a statement, he said he prepared it partly from notes and partly from memory.

I have previously noted Holmes's appraisal of Oswald in the analysis of the report itself. His recollection here is consistent:

"Mr. Belin. Now, I notice - well, you might just, without even looking at the memorandum, first just give us your general impression of what went on there.

Mr. Holmes. There was no formality to the interrogation. One man would question Oswald. Another would interrupt with a different trend of thought, or something in connection, and it was sort of an informal questioning or interrogation. Oswald was quite composed. He answered readily those questions that he wanted to answer. He would cut off just like with a knife anything that he didn't want to answer. And those particular things that he didn't want to answer were anything that pertained with the assassination of the President or the shooting of Officer Tippit (my emphasis). He flatly denied any knowledge of either. He was not particularly obnoxious. He seemed to be intelligent. He seemed to be clearminded. He seemed to have a good memory, because in questioning him about the boxes, which I had original applications in front of me, he was pretty accurate. He knew box numbers and he answered these questions readily and answered them truthfully, as verified by the box rental applications that I had in front of me." (p.297)

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Once Belin has from a Government witness, a man clearly not partial to Oswald, such clear and explicit statements that are so contradictory to the official position and the sworn statements of other Government officials, what does this man supposedly looking for fact, supposedly digging to get to the bottom of everything, do? He changes the subject. He then wants to know what Oswald was wearing.

Now here we have a picture painted of Oswald as a man who spoke truthfully. Here we have a clear and concise statement that there was no planning to the interrogation. It was a completely haphazard affair^{al} and had none of the attributes of a scientific police inquiry. And what would Oswald refuse to talk about? "Anything that pertained ~~to~~^{with} the assassination of the President or the shooting of Officer Tippit."

This makes it clear that the accusations of lies against Oswald are false except as they might relate to the assassination with which he was charged, and as a matter of fact, even those seemingly false statements Oswald is quoted as having made to the police may be as technically true as the continuous flow of technically true but false statements from the Government witnesses throughout this entire proceeding.

I think Holmes's testimony alone shatters completely the position of the Commission that it would believe nothing Oswald said because he lied. (p.297)

Postal Inspector HOEMES - continued

Holmes discusses Oswald's statements about the map found in his room and explains that Oswald showed the markings on the map were places he went seeking employment. He had been referred to some of them by the Texas Employment Commission.

On the question of his politics, Holmes said that when asked if he was a Communist, Oswald replied, "I am not a Communist. I am a Marxist."

When Oswald was asked if he had fired a rifle since leaving the Marine Corps, he said, "Only a .22. (p.298)"

The only time Oswald showed any anger, according to Holmes, was on the persistence of the questioning about the Hidell card in the billfold. Of this, Holmes said, "and he showed a little anger. Really the only time that he flared up."

Belin goes to the question of Oswald and a lawyer, and quotes Oswald as saying he didn't have an attorney and didn't want an attorney. He thereafter quotes Oswald as saying that he had tried to get the New York lawyer (p.299) whose name Holmes later admits probably was Abt.

I think in this connection it probably is significant to note that, even with the confusion in Holmes's mind, that Abt was a Civil Liberties Union lawyer, Holmes did connect the Civil Liberties Union and Oswald's want for a lawyer. There was no reason for him or anyone else to connect John Abt with the ACLU. The connection could only be Oswald's saying if he couldn't get Abt, he wanted a Civil Liberties lawyer, which we know from other sources is what he said. (p.300)

On the question of the entry of the names of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and the American Civil Liberties Union on Oswald's application for rental of box No. 6225 at Dallas, Holmes quotes Oswald as conceding that, he, Oswald, had entered those names on his application

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and said, "I paid for it out of my own personal money." Holmes said Oswald declared he did not rent the box in the names of these organizations, and said, "I don't know why I put it on." Holmes said further, "Oswald 'wouldn't talk about it.'" (p.301)

With regard to Oswald's questioning about the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the questioning seems to have been about Oswald's own phony committee and not the New York based one. Holmes said, "I got the impression that Captain Fritz was trying to get out of him the fact that he was the head man or the president of it, and he kept evading that and would be real evasive." Obviously. He was connected only with the New Orleans one, which consisted of nothing but Oswald.

Oswald was asked if he planned to establish a Fair Play for Cuba Committee chapter in Dallas, and he said he didn't because he was too busy trying to get a job.

The story of Oswald and lunch:

"Mr. Belin. Did anyone say anything about Oswald saying anything about his leaving the Texas School Book Depository after the shooting?

Mr. Holmes. He said, as I remember, actually, in answer to questions there, he mentioned that when lunchtime came, one of the Negro employees asked him if he would like to sit and eat ^{(sic) lunch} with him, and he said, 'Yes, but I can't go right now.' He said, 'You go and take the elevator on down.' No, he said, 'You go ahead, but send the elevator back up.' He didn't say where, and he didn't mention what floor he was on. Nobody seemed to ask him." (p.302)

This episode as related by Holmes is exactly what a man whose work was taking him a few minutes extra would have done. He wasn't quite ready to go down on the elevator, and he asked that it be sent up so that when he was ready he could go down. There is nothing abnormal

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or unusual about it. Especially in the context of other people on the fifth and sixth floors subsequently, none of whom saw Oswald there.

Holmes remembered something about Oswald's claim that a crew-cut man came rushing into the building as Oswald was leaving, showed Oswald his credentials, and asked for the location of the telephone, which Oswald said he pointed out.

It is my belief that the others present at the interrogation quoted Oswald as having said this man showed Secret Service credentials.

I have never seen any interrogation intended to show whether or not such a man made telephone calls to either the Secret Service or FBI Dallas offices. Nor have I seen any check of long-distance calls from this phone, of which the telephone company does keep a record. The failure of the Commission to check this, after Oswald had reported it to the police, is a clear declaration that neither the Commission nor the police agencies will dare look into anything that might substantiate anything that Oswald told the police, and that would tend to or might, in fact, totally clear him. (p.302)

After further discussion of Oswald's character, the fact that he was composed, etc., Belin asks Holmes about Oswald's trip to Mexico and asked if it was covered. Holmes replied in the affirmative, contrary to some of the others present, and quotes Oswald on his explanation of the cost of the trip and its reason, allegedly to go to Russia by way of Cuba. Holmes also said the police seemed to be chiefly interested in where Oswald got the money. Belin repeats, "Did he admit that he went to Mexico?" and Holmes's positive reply was "Oh, yes." (p.303)

Holmes then goes further in quoting Oswald as having said that Oswald reported himself to have been angry when he was refused a Cuban visa. Holmes's recollection of Oswald's description of his own conduct

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at this point was "he said he burst out of there ...". Oswald then said, according to Holmes, that he went to the Russian Embassy and had no more success there where he was told, "Come back in 30 days," or "something like that. And, he went out of there angry and disgusted."

When Belin points out this information was not included in Holmes's memorandum and asks if it is something "you might have picked up from just reading the papers, or is this something you remember hearing?" Holmes's response is, "That is what he said in there."

Holmes also gives his impression of Oswald's attitude to people: "In fact, I got the distinct impression that he showed no flareup, no animosity when Connally's name was mentioned. ..." Nor did he have any animosity toward Pres. Kennedy. (p.304)

On the incident in the lunchroom, Holmes quotes Oswald as saying that Oswald was standing there drinking a coke at the time Officer Baker entered.

Returning again to the question of lunch, Holmes said, "The Negro said, 'Come on and let's eat lunch together.' ... And he (Oswald) said, 'You go ahead, and send the elevator back up to me and I will come down just as soon as I am finished.'" Again, a clear inference that Oswald planned to leave that floor as soon as he completed the task upon which he was engaged. (p.306)

Holmes was recalled for a subsequent deposition on July 23, 1964, in Dallas, with the questioning by Liebeler. (7 H 525-30). Most of it is taken up with the details of mailing, times consumed in the shipment of packages, etc.

Holmes revealed that in New Orleans, as a consequence of what he says was a failure to comply with regulations, a third section of the application for the post office box was not destroyed as it should have

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have been. It shows mail for Marina Oswald and A. J. Hidell was "good in the box." (p.527)

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Holmes is then shown what is called Holmes Exhibit No. 3 with postmarks of October 16 in Dallas and October 11 in New Orleans. Liebeler was frank and said, "Let me come bluntly to the point. My problem is this. Oswald wasn't in New Orleans on October 11. He was in Dallas." Holmes then conjectures about how this change of address card on Oswald's behalf could have been postmarked in New Orleans first and Dallas subsequently at a time when Oswald couldn't have done it in person. (p.529)

This is especially complicated by the fact that, on ~~December~~ ^{September} 24, before leaving New Orleans, Oswald had already filled out a change of address card. The one in question here is clearly not in his writing. Holmes has had no advice at all on this from New Orleans. It was Holmes's opinion that ~~it~~ because the Lafayette Station in New Orleans was entered on the card, "it looks like that was completed by the person at Lafayette Station." Liebeler's interpretation is, "that is exactly what it says."

Holmes points out that no other station would know the location of the box at Lafayette Station. Holmes agrees "There is not the slightest evidence that Oswald ever filled that form out or ever saw it." Liebeler notes the handwriting is obviously different. Liebeler then says, "So apparently somebody in the New Orleans post office filled this form out?" Holmes said, "They could have done it over a telephone instruction, long-distance telephone call." Liebeler then says, "Well, they could have done that from the records they had in their possession, because he already had filled out a Post Office Department 3575 instructing to forward mail ... to 2515 West Fifth Street, in Irving, which they had received, of course, on September 24?" and Holmes agreed. Neither one asks why such a totally unnecessary step would have been taken.

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The obvious inference is that someone not Oswald did this, thinking it was on Oswald's behalf, but the someone was in New Orleans and either went to the post office and had a clerk fill it out, filled it out and left it in New Orleans, or arranged for it by mail. But why should someone want to fill out a change of address card for Oswald when Oswald had already done so?

There is no indication that the handwriting on this card was ever checked with any of the other samples of handwriting available to the Commission.

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Liebeler wound it up by saying, "Well, in any event, we will add this to the pile."

This is not in the highest standards of investigation.