

AT THE TEXAS THEATRE

Statements of Witnesses - Johnny Calvin BREWER
Deposition -

April 2, 1964, 7 H 1-8

- He is a 22-year-old manager of the Hardy's Shoe Store, 213 West Jefferson St. branch. He has since been transferred to the downtown store, a considerable advancement.

He claims he was listening to all of the details of the Kennedy killing on a transistor radio and apparently in the sequence, before anything happened, heard over the radio that a policeman had been shot in Oak Cliff.

Now at the rate the Commission has estimated Oswald traveled, either this couldn't have happened or Oswald was really traveling; in that event, why did it take him so long to get to the theatre?

After hearing of the shooting of the policeman, he heard a siren coming down Jefferson headed west. (p.2)

His store is located on the north side of Jefferson. He was in the shop, looked up and out toward the street and the police cars and "saw the man enter the lobby." His store ^{has} ~~is~~ an area of about 15 feet recess between the door and the edge of the sidewalk. There are show windows on each side.

After the police car, which by this time had already become plural, made a U-turn, "Oswald looked over his shoulder and turned around and walked up West Jefferson towards the theatre." Belin asked him if he at that time knew the man was Oswald, and he said he didn't. He described him as 5'9" and weighing about 150 pounds. So far he is the only witness who has come this close, and if he didn't appear at a lineup, it's pretty clear why he came this close. He doesn't remember the color of the trousers, but says the man was wearing a brown sport shirt with the shirt-tail out, no jacket, and he had brown hair. He also says the man had a T-shirt on. (p.3)

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As the man walked away, Brewer went out and watched him. Apparently here we have the first "brave" man. Brewer's exact words are, "and I walked out the front and watched him, and he went into the theatre."

Then: "Mr. Belin. Why did you happen to watch this particular Man? Mr. Brewer. He just looked funny to me. Well, in the first place, I had seen him some place before. I think he had been in my store before. And when you wait on somebody, you recognize them, and he just seemed funny. His hair was sort of messed up and looked like he had been running, and he looked scared, and he looked funny.

Mr. Belin. Did you notice any of his actions when he was standing in your lobby there?

Mr. Brewer. No; he just stood there and stared." (p.4)

Belin then asks: "Well, would you state than what happened? You said that you saw him walk into the Texas Theatre?

Mr. Brewer. He walked into the Texas Theatre and I walked up to the theatre, to the box office and asked Mrs. Postal if she sold a ticket to a man who was wearing a brown shirt, and she said no, she hadn't. She was listening to the radio herself. And I said that a man walked in there, and I was going to go inside and ask the usher if he had seen him. So I walked in and Butch Burroughs -

Mr. Belin. Who was Burroughs?

Mr. Brewer. He was behind the counter. He operated the concession and takes tickets. He was behind the concession stand and I asked him if he had seen a man in a brown shirt of that description, matching that description, and he said he had been working behind the counter and hadn't seen anybody. And I asked him if he would come with me and show me where the exits were and we would check the exits. And he asked me why. I told him that I thought the guy looked suspicious.

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Mr. Belin. Could you tell whether or not he bought a ticket?

Mr. Brewer. No; he just turned and walked right straight in.

Mr. Belin. When he walked right straight in, could you see the box office?

Mr. Brewer. Well, the box office is right in the middle of the front of the theatre, and he turned right at the corner and went in. You could see him if he was buying a ticket, because the box office is flush with all the other buildings." (p.4)

A picture of a man with a sublime faith in the impossible. He not only expects to get past the cashier, but expects to get past the ticket taker. And it may even have happened, but who in the world would ever expect to get away with it? And why should Oswald have tried with almost \$14 in his pocket? (p.4)

Brewer doesn't know why he asked Julia Postal, the cashier, if she had seen the man. Belin asks Brewer if he asked Julia Postal and:

"Mr. Brewer. ~~Well, just the fact that he~~ Just asked her whether he had bought or she had seen him go in.

Mr. Belin. She - did she say whether she had seen him, or don't you remember?

Mr. Brewer. She said she couldn't remember a man of that description going in." (p.5)

With no more people in a theatre than would fit in a very small section of a small room, she ^{sh} ^{had} would have/no trouble recalling any man who had just gone in, unless, of course, she just wasn't looking and his walk was a silent one.

He and Butch Burroughs, the ticket taker who also has a concession (and as we have seen, in an almost entirely empty theatre, just happened to be busy behind the counter), checked all the exits and found because

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of the unusual nature of the closing mechanism that none of the exits had been recently used. They then checked the Balcony. Belin prompts him, saying, "Now you first looked on the bottom floor and you did not see him?" and of course, Brewer agreed.

Brewer's estimate of a maximum of 15 to 20 patrons in the theatre altogether. After all of this, Julia Postal called the police. Brewer took the back exit and Burroughs the front, and they each stood guard, according to Brewer's description. The account resumes with what happened prior to the arrival of the police:

"Mr. Belin. Then what happened?"

Mr. Brewer. Well, just before they came, they turned the house lights on, and I looked out from the curtains and saw the man.

Mr. Belin. Where was he when you saw him?

Mr. Brewer. He was in the center section about six or seven rows, from the back, toward the back.

Mr. Belin. Toward the back? Are you sure? Mr. Brewer, do you know ~~Mr. Brewer~~ exactly ^{which} ~~which~~ row he was in from the back?

Mr. Brewer. No; I don't know which row.

Mr. Belin. Then what did you see?

Mr. Brewer. He stood up and walked to the aisle to his right and then he turned around and walked back and sat down and at this time there was no place I could see." (p.5)

What Brewer meant by "At this time there was no place I could see" I don't know; but either Belin did or didn't care. Brewer's account then described how, when he heard a noise outside, he opened the door, was grabbed and searched by the police, after which he relayed his suspicions to them. He continued: "And I said, yes, I just seen him. And he asked me if I would point him out. And I and two or three other

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officers walked out on the stage and I pointed him out, and there were officers coming in from the front of the show, I guess, coming toward that way, and officers going from the back.

Mr. Belin. Then what did you see?

Mr. Brewer. Well, I saw this policeman approach Oswald, and Oswald stood up and I heard some hollering, I don't know exactly what he said, and this man hit Patrolman McDonald." (p.6)

Having just said, "there was no place I could see," Brewer then said, "I and two or three officers walked out on the stage ..." Why should he have told the officers that he could point the man out, as I understood his previous statement, when he couldn't see him? And what kind of lunk-head cops do they have in Dallas - or are they just that brave - to walk out on the stage with the lights on while looking for a man they knew to be armed? This may all have happened, but it sure is crazy as hell.

His narrative of events continues ~~with~~ with a description of the man knocking McDonald down, following which McDonald got up and then "I saw this gun come up and - in Oswald's hand, a gun up in the air."

It may be wrong, but I believe this version is not that of the other witnesses, but if it is true, either Oswald didn't want to shoot anybody, or he knew his gun wouldn't work. But if he was already a murderer and perhaps a murderer twice, why should he worry about shooting again?

Brewer gives it a dramatic touch by quoting one of the cops as hollering, "Kill the President, will you." This is a rather strange remark from a policeman who was looking for the killer of a policeman. There^{was,} as yet, certainly, no connection between the killer of the President and the killer of Tippit.

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Brewer also said he heard Oswald say, "I am not resisting arrest", about twice. (p.6)

Belin then takes him through a recapitulation of the story. He said the man was walking a bit faster than normal when he left the window of the shoe store, ^{that} at the time he saw him he was in front of a furniture store the name of which he couldn't recall until reminded, the man was walking "just a little faster than usual" (odd how he knew how the man usually walked). Although Brewer knew how rapidly the man had walked, he didn't know how rapidly he himself had.

Shown Exhibit 150 he said it looked like the shirt the man was wearing. He didn't notice if it had any holes in the elbows. (p.7)

Brewer was fast at picking up what he thought might be cues:

"Mr. Belin. Did you hear this man as he was in the theatre say anything other than 'I am not resisting arrest'?"

Mr. Brewer. No.

Mr. Belin. Did he say anything, or could you not understand it?

Mr. Brewer. He said something, but I couldn't understand what it was." (p.8)