

DEPOSITORY EMPLOYEES

Statement of Witnesses - Eddie PIPER, April 8, 1964 (6 H 382-6)
Deposition : May 14, 1964 (7 H 388-90)

Piper is the 56-year-old janitor of the Book Depository who has an 8th-grade education. He knows Oswald and saw him on the 22d:

"Mr. Ball. Was that the last time you saw him?

Mr. Piper. Just at 12 o'clock.

Mr. Ball. Where were you at 12 o'clock.

Mr. Piper. Down on the first floor.

Mr. Ball. What was he doing?

Mr. Piper. Well, I said to him - 'It's about lunch time. I believe I'll go have lunch.' So, he says, 'Yeah' - he mumbled something - I don't know whether he said he was going up or going out, so I got my sandwich off of the radiator and went on back to the first window of the first floor." (p.383)

Piper says he stayed in the second window from the front door until after the shot, but he could see nothing.

Piper didn't see what Oswald did after this brief encounter. He stayed, as he had said earlier, at the window until the shots were fired. After the shots, he came out of that area and went over to the end of the counter which he described as "where they make coffee there by the stand".

Why Ball avoids a description of the ^{round} surroundings of the second window I cannot say. But examination of Commission Exhibit 1061 on p.148 of the Report shows, as do photographs, that there were several steps leading from the street level to the main entrance. Employees could see things standing on the steps and so testified. The windows are higher. It seems strange that with the group of people in front of those on the steps not blocking the vision of those standing on the steps that Ball shouldn't be interested in why Piper, who had a higher point of

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view, could see nothing. The second window is in about the middle of the southside of the building.

Piper saw Mr. Truly and the policeman come in. However, he is uncertain whether it was "a policeman or FBI or who ..." This would seem to make for something less than a good observer or a dependable witness. (p.385)

Ball refers to a statement Piper gave to the sheriff's department the next day. Piper says that in it he had told the person who took the statement that Oswald had said he was going up to eat or going out to eat.

This affidavit appears in Vol. 21 on p.138. In it Piper also says, "I saw the President pass", which may or may not be in conflict with his deposition, and he said that he "hesrd some shots and looked at the clock there and saw it was 12:25 p.m." Unless the clock was wrong, this was obviously false. He said ^{that} at 1 o'clock the police "made ^{us} vacate the building and as we were being checked out, I noticed that 'Lee' wasn't with us, and I mentioned to some of the employees there checking out that Lee wasn't there ..."

There is no testimony about any forced evacuation of the building. He himself said he remained there working until 7 p.m. and Truly testified that nobody was checked out.

In his deposition of May 14, Piper establishes himself as an even less dependable witness, at least in some respects, for when Ball had lead him into finally saying the person with Mr. Truly was a police officer, he also got Piper to say the officer was not wearing a white helmet, which presumably Baker, a motorcycle policeman, was.

He is asked if he saw anyone come down the steps prior to the arrival of Truly and the officer. He says no one did, specifically

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including Vicki Adams.

It is conspicuous that he is not asked how long he remained where he could see the bottom of the steps for he said, in response to the question about Vicki Adams, "I don't know about that, if she said she did, it was after I got over here and walked over to the back door."

The reason for this deficiency in the questioning is clear: If he had remained there for any length of time, he would have seen who entered or left, and especially this would have included Oswald coming down the steps and leaving by the front door, if that is what happened. But it should have been an important question for the Commission to ask because it would establish, or at least help establish, the time that Oswald could have or did leave the building. The failure to ask this obvious question cannot be considered an oversight.

The manner of Ball's questioning indicates Vicki Adams did come down during the period after the shots and before Truly entered the building. I don't know; I have not at this time read her testimony.

Then Piper says he didn't tell anyone he noticed Oswald was missing, whereas earlier he had said that he had mentioned this to other employees. (p.389) and repeats that he didn't mention it to anyone on the next page.