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3
4 PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION
5 ON THE
6 ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY
7

8 Dallas, Texas
9 Thursday, July 23, 1964
10 3:15 p.m.
11

12 The President's Commission met, pursuant to recess,
13 at 3:15 p.m., in the office of the U. S. Attorney, 301 Post
14 Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Texas.

15 PRESENT:

16 Wesley J. Liebler, Staff Counsel

17 Helen Laidrich, Reporter.
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25

OK - WJL

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. LIEBELER: Would you rise and raise your right hand?
3 Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to
4 give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
5 truth, so help you God?

6 MR. ^{TEAGUE} ~~TEAGUE~~: I do.

7 MR. LIEBELER: My name is Wesley J. Liebeler. I am an
8 attorney on the staff of the President's Commission investi-
9 gating the assassination of President Kennedy.

10 I have been authorized to take your testimony by the
11 Commission pursuant to authority granted to it by President
12 Johnson's Executive Order 11130 dated November 29, 1963,
13 and Joint Resolution of Congress No. 137.

14 Under the Commission's Rules of Procedure, you are
15 entitled to have an attorney present, and you are entitled
16 to three days notice of the hearing, and you are entitled
17 to the usual privileges so far as not answering questions
18 are concerned.

19 Since you are here without an attorney, I presume
20 that you are prepared to go ahead without the presence of
21 counsel?

22 MR. ~~TEAGUE~~: Yes.

23 MR. LIEBELER: Would you state your name for the
24 record?

25 MR. ~~TEAGUE~~: James Thomas Teague.

1 MR. LIEBELER: What is your address?

2 MR. TEAGUE: My address is 700 West Euless in Euless,
3 Texas.

4 MR. LIEBELER: What is your employment?

5 MR. TEAGUE: I am a salesman for Cedar Springs Dodge.

6 MR. LIEBELER: Here in Dallas?

7 MR. TEAGUE: Dallas, yes.

8 MR. LIEBELER: When were you born?

9 MR. TEAGUE: October 17, 1936.

10 MR. LIEBELER: It is my understanding that you were in
11 the vicinity of the Texas School Book Depository Building at
12 the time of the assassination, is that correct?

13 MR. TEAGUE: That's correct, yes sir.

14 MR. LIEBELER: Would you tell us how you happened to
15 be there and what you saw, and what happened.

16 MR. TEAGUE: I was going downtown to pick up my wife --
17 she was my girl that I was going with at the time -- to take
18 her to lunch, and I accidentally came upon ~~her~~ ^{The Motorcade}

19 I was not planning to watch the parade or anything.
20 There were several cars stopped in front of me, and I stopped
21 there myself under the Triple Underpass and got out and was
22 standing there just, oh, about a minute before the President's
23 car came by.

24 MR. LIEBELER: Where was your car actually located now?

25 MR. TEAGUE: The nose of the car was sticking out from

1 underneath the Triple Underpass.

2 MR. LIEBELER: What street were you on?

3 MR. TEAGUE: What is the furthest street to the south?

4 MR. LIEBELER: Commerce Street?

5 MR. TEAGUE: Commerce, yes.

6 MR. LIEBELER: Commerce Street is a one-way going east?

7 MR. TEAGUE: Right. That's correct.

8 MR. LIEBELER: So they stopped all traffic on Commerce
9 Street?

10 MR. TEAGUE: Cars in the left lane were stopping, the
11 ones next to the curb, and several cars had stopped in front
12 of me, and I stopped.

13 ~~The~~ The car was just halfway out from underneath the under-
14 pass, and I got out of my car and stood by the bridge abut-
15 ment.

16 MR. LIEBELER: So you were just out from under the
17 Triple Underpass so that you could see the President's car
18 and the motorcade coming on down Elm Street, is that correct?

19 MR. TEAGUE: That is correct.

20 MR. LIEBELER: Did you see the motorcade come down
21 Elm Street?

22 MR. TEAGUE: Yes, I did.

23 MR. LIEBELER: Go ahead and tell us what you saw.

24 MR. TEAGUE: Well, I was standing there watching, and
25 really I was watching to try to distinguish the President

1 and his car.

2 ~~-----~~ About this time I heard what sounded like a firecracker.
3 Well, a very loud firecracker. It certainly didn't sound
4 like a rifle shot. It was more of a loud cannon type sound.

5 ~~-----~~ I looked around to see who was throwing firecrackers
6 or what was going on and I turned my head away from the
7 motorcade and of course, two more shots.

8 And I ducked behind the post when I realized somebody
9 was shooting after the third shot. After the third shot, I
10 ducked behind the bridge abutment and was there for a second,
11 and I glanced out and just as I looked out, the car following
12 the President's car, the one with the Secret Service men,
13 was just flying past at that time.

14 MR. LIEBELER: Going on Elm Street under the Triple
15 Underpass?

16 MR. TEAGUE: Right. Going on Elm. So I stood there
17 looking around. I looked up -- there was a motorcycle
18 policeman, and he stopped and had drawn his gun and was running
19 up the embankment toward the railroad tracks.

20 A crowd of people, several people, were starting to
21 come down into that area where he was running, and the people
22 pointing, and excitement up there and so on, and about that
23 time a patrolman who evidently had been stationed under the
24 Triple Underpass walked up and said, "What happened?"
25 and I said, "I don't know; something."

1 And we walked up to the -- by this time the motorcycle
2 policeman returned back close to where his motorcycle was,
3 and we walked up there and there was a man standing there.
4 Seeing that he was very excited -- I don't remember his name
5 -- at the time I did have it on the tip of my tongue --
6 very excited saying he was watching the president and it
7 seemed like his head just exploded. This was a couple or
8 three minutes after this happened.

9 And the patrolman said, "Well, I saw something fly off
10 back on the street."

11 We walked back down there, and another man joined us
12 who identified himself as the deputy sheriff, who was in
13 civilian clothes, and I guess this was three or four minutes
14 after. I don't know how to gauge time on something like
15 that.

16 And I says, "Well, you know now, I recall something
17 ^{sting}stunning me on the face while I was standing down there."

18 And he looked up and he said, "Yes, you have blood there
19 on your cheek."

20 And I reached up and there was a couple of drops of
21 blood. And he said, "Where were you standing?"

22 And I says, "Right down here." We walked 15 feet away
23 when this deputy sheriff said, "Look here on the curb."
24 There was a mark quite obviously that was a bullet, and it
25 was very fresh.

1 We turned around and we looked back up to see where
2 this possibly have come from, and the policeman thought he
3 had seen something over here.

4 MR. LIEBELER: ~~Well, now,~~ I have some pictures here and
5 I will show you to indicate these places. ~~I have a picture~~
6 ~~here,~~ an aerial view of the whole area, Commission Exhibit
7 354. Of course, the Texas School Book Depository Building
8 is here on the left, and this is the Triple Underpass here,
9 and this, of course, is Commerce Street going toward the
10 east.

11 As I understand it, your car was just nosed out in the
12 left hand lane of Commerce Street and was just out from under
13 the railroad tracks that go over the Triple Underpass, so the
14 nose of your car was on the easternmost portion, on the
15 eastern side of the railroad tracks that go over the Triple
16 Underpass, is that correct?

17 MR. TEAGUE: That is correct.

18 MR. LIEBELER: Now did you get out of your car?

19 MR. TEAGUE: Right.

20 MR. LIEBELER: What did you do? Did you stay near your
21 car or did you walk on the area toward the grassy plaza?

22 MR. TEAGUE: I was standing three or four feet in front
23 of the concrete embankment right here (pointing).

24 MR. LIEBELER: Let's make a number six on this picture
25 as to where you were standing. This is the concrete strip

1 that runs between Commerce and Main Street right here?

2 MR. TEAGUE: I was standing about right there.

3 MR. LIEBELER: At number six?

4 MR. TEAGUE: Yes; right.

5 MR. LIEBELER: Now, that is where you were standing
6 when you apparently got hit with this flying, whatever it
7 was?

8 MR. TEAGUE: Right.

9 MR. LIEBELER: Then after you had run into this deputy
10 sheriff, you looked along the street and you saw what you
11 thought to be a mark made by a --

12 MR. TEAGUE: A motorcycle was parked here and the police-
13 man was here on the grass right here, and there was a
14 swarm of people around him.

15 MR. LIEBELER: At number seven. Let's put a number
16 seven there.

17 MR. TEAGUE: This man was relating his story of how he
18 was standing right there as he witnessed the facts. He said
19 it looked like the President's head exploded.

20 And I said I felt something hit me. We walked down
21 here.

22 MR. LIEBELER: Towards number six?

23 MR. TEAGUE: Right. When we got within about 20 feet,
24 the deputy sheriff spotted the place about 12 to 15 feet out
25 from the embankment on the curb, and turned around, and we

1 looked up here where the policeman originally ran up on the
2 grass here.

3 MR. LIEBELER: There is an area circled here with the
4 letter C in it. Is that where the policeman ran toward the
5 grassy area; included in that circle, is that right?

6 MR. TEAGUE: Right. I pointed this out, and we turned
7 around and looked toward the School Book Depository, and
8 from the reflection of the sun it was something on the window.

9 Not the -- well, it is maybe five or six windows which
10 were open, which it was not the window that proved to be
11 where the shots were fired, but it was a different window
12 like it had spider webs or dust, and maybe shots had come
13 through the window.

14 We said maybe this is where they came from. And the
15 deputy sheriff ran back to the policeman. I may not be
16 quite accurate, but I believe at the time there was a whole
17 swarm of motorcycle policemen coming back to the area under
18 the underpass going the wrong way here on Elm.

19 They came back and parked, and he mentioned to them --
20 that is probably five minutes after it happened, and he was
21 on the radio, and everybody ran up around the School Book
22 Depository at this time.

23 MR. LIEBELER: Now, let's go back and fix the general
24 spot when the deputy sheriff saw the mark on the street,
25 going back to point six, which is where you were standing when

1 you were hit. We go east along --

2 MR. TEAGUE: Right here is the curb.

3 MR. LIEBELER: There is a curb that runs along --

4 MR. TEAGUE: About 12 to 15 feet right on the top of
5 round of the curb, was the mark that very definitely was
6 fresh, and I would say it was a mark of a bullet.

7 MR. LIEBELER: ~~Let's put a number eight there where you~~
8 ~~saw this mark, approximately.~~ You say it is about 15 or 20
9 feet east of where you were standing?

10 MR. TEAGUE: No, about 12 to 15 feet.

11 MR. LIEBELER: East of where you were standing?

12 MR. TEAGUE: Right.

13 MR. LIEBELER: At point six?

14 MR. TEAGUE: Right.

15 MR. LIEBELER: So we have the point fixed there, and
16 we can just estimate 12 to 15 feet east on Main Street, is
17 that right?

18 MR. TEAGUE: That's correct.

19 MR. LIEBELER: That would have been on the south curb
20 of Main Street, is that right?

21 MR. TEAGUE: It would have been on the south curb.

22 MR. LIEBELER: About 12 to 15 feet east of the point
23 number six on Commission Exhibit No. 354.

24 Now you yourself, as I understand it, did not see the
25 President hit?

1 MR. TEAGUE: I did not, no.

2 MR. LIEBELER: How long after did you feel yourself get
3 hit by anything?

4 MR. TEAGUE: I felt it at the time, but I didn't asso-
5 ciate, didn't make any connection, and ignored it.

6 And after this happened, or maybe the second or third
7 shot, I couldn't tell you definitely -- I made no connection.
8 I looked around wondering what was going on, and I recall
9 this. We got to talking, and I recall that something had
10 ^{stung} stunned me, and then the deputy sheriff looked up and said,
11 "You have blood there on your cheek."

12 / That is when we walked back down there.

13 MR. LIEBELER: Do you have any idea which bullet might
14 have made that mark?

15 MR. TEAGUE: I would guess it was either the second or
16 third. I wouldn't say definitely on which one.

17 MR. LIEBELER: Did you hear any more shots after you
18 felt yourself get hit in the face?

19 MR. TEAGUE: I believe I did.

20 MR. LIEBELER: You think you did?

21 MR. TEAGUE: I believe I did.

22 MR. LIEBELER: How many?

23 MR. TEAGUE: I believe that it was the second shot, so
24 I heard the third shot afterwards.

25 MR. LIEBELER: Did you hear three shots?

MR. TEAGUE: I heard three shots, yes sir. And I did

1 notice the time on the Hertz clock. It was 12:29.

2 MR. LIEBELER: That was about the time that you felt
3 yourself struck?

4 MR. TEAGUE: I just glanced. I mean I just stopped,
5 got out of my car, and here came the motorcade. I just
6 happened upon the scene.

7 MR. LIEBELER: Now I understand that you went back
8 there subsequently and took some pictures of the area, isn't
9 that right?

10 MR. TEAGUE: Pardon?

11 MR. LIEBELER: I understand that you went back subse-
12 quently and took some pictures of the area.

13 MR. TEAGUE: Yes, about a month ago.

14 MR. LIEBELER: With a motion picture camera?

15 MR. TEAGUE: Yes. I didn't know anybody knew about that.

16 MR. LIEBELER: I show you Baker Exhibit No. 1, and ask
17 you if you took that picture.

18 MR. TEAGUE: No, not to my knowledge.

19 MR. LIEBELER: Now in point of fact, that picture was
20 taken by another individual with a motion picture camera,
21 and the picture is not quite as striking as I thought.

22 I confused the picture taken by somebody else with the
23 picture I thought you had taken.

24 You yourself did take pictures of the area about a
25 month ago?

1 MR. TEAGUE: Yes. My wife and I were going to
2 Indianapolis. This is the home of my parents. I was taking
3 some pictures of the area to show to them. This was the
4 latter part of May.

5 MR. LIEBELER: Did you look at the curb at that time to
6 see if the mark was still there?

7 MR. TEAGUE: Yes.

8 MR. LIEBELER: Was it still there?

9 MR. TEAGUE: Not that I could tell.

10 MR. LIEBELER: Did you meet a newspaper photographer
11 that day and talk to him at all about the assassination?

12 MR. TEAGUE: The day of the assassination?

13 MR. LIEBELER: Yes.

14 MR. TEAGUE: Not that I can recall. I left the area
15 down there at about a quarter to one, and the officer there
16 told me to go to the police headquarters and report to some-
17 body down there and tell them what I had seen.

18 MR. LIEBELER: Did you do that?

19 MR. TEAGUE: I did that.

20 MR. LIEBELER: Now referring to Baker Exhibit No. 1,
21 does that look like it might have been taken from approxi-
22 mately the place where you were standing at the time you
23 got hit, from the same general area?

24 MR. TEAGUE: I believe I was back further to the left,
25 back down this way further.

1 MR. LIEBELER: That is further toward the west?

2 MR. TEAGUE: Yes.

3 MR. LIEBELER: Further down toward the Triple Underpass?

4 MR. TEAGUE: That's right.

5 MR. LIEBELER: Did it appear to you that the lamp post
6 that is showing right here on the right hand side of Baker
7 Exhibit No. 1 is the very end of the grassy area described by
8 Commerce Street and Main Street, and right down toward the
9 concrete embankment?

10 MR. TEAGUE: It might possibly be.

11 MR. LIEBELER: Are you able to tell for sure by looking
12 at Baker Exhibit No. 1?

13 MR. TEAGUE: No.

14 MR. LIEBELER: ~~It is pretty hard to tell where it has~~
15 ~~been taken from.~~ (U2)

16 Now, I have another picture here that purports to be a
17 picture of a curb with a bullet mark on it, and ask you if (U)
18 that looks like what you saw that day.

19 MR. TEAGUE: It looks similar, but I can't say whether
20 this is the actual one or not, because you can see it ap-
21 pears to be a bullet mark.

22 MR. LIEBELER: I have initialled this picture, having
23 marked it Teague Exhibit No. 1, and I would like to have you
24 initial it for the purpose of identification.

25 MR. TEAGUE: (Initials.)

MR. LIEBELER: You indicate that the mark on the curb --

1 MR. TEAGUE: I can't tell too much which angle of the
2 curb this is or what here.

3 MR. LIEBELER: That is not a very clear picture either.
4 Actually, I can't figure which way to look at it.

5 MR. TEAGUE: I can't either.

6 MR. LIEBELER: It looks like there is a man standing
7 there with a hand along the side of the curb.

8 MR. TEAGUE: Yes. This looks like the curb here at the
9 back and the sun shining down. The bullet mark was right
10 at the circle of the curb as this here.

11 MR. LIEBELER: In other words, where the curb turned?

12 MR. TEAGUE: Right. At the very round, right in the
13 middle of the round.

14 MR. LIEBELER: That is where the street curb turns when
15 it turns there? I don't understand that. (Looking at
16 Commission Exhibit No. 354.)

17 MR. TEAGUE: This right here, this picture was taken
18 this way. It would be looking this way.

19 MR. LIEBELER: I am still at a loss. You indicated
20 there is a turn in the curb at some point along here. Does
21 the curb end and the road go together?

22 MR. TEAGUE: Here is the curb here I am talking about
23 on the very round.

24 MR. LIEBELER: On the round top of the curb? The curb
25 itself continues on, but the bullet struck sort of the top

1 edge of the curb?

2 MR. TEAGUE: That's right.

3 MR. LIEBELER: I understand. Did you have any idea where
4 these shots came from when you heard them ringing out?

5 MR. TEAGUE: Yes. I thought they were coming from
6 my left.

7 MR. LIEBELER: ~~Well, from your left~~ ^(LH) immediately to
8 your left, or toward the back?

9 Of course, now we have other evidence that would indi-
10 cate that the shots did come from the Texas School Book
11 Depository, but see if we can disregard that and determine
12 just what you heard when the shots were fired in the first
13 place.

14 MR. TEAGUE: To recall everything is almost impossible.
15 Just an impression is all I recall, is the fact that my
16 first impression was that up by the, whatever you call the
17 monument, or whatever it was --

18 MR. LIEBELER: Up above number seven?

19 MR. TEAGUE: -- that somebody was throwing firecrackers
20 up there, that the police were running up there to see what
21 was going on, and this was my first impression. Somebody was
22 causing a disturbance, that somebody had drawn a gun and
23 was shooting at the crowd, and the police were running up
24 to it.

25 When I saw the people throwing themselves on the

1 ground is when I realized there was serious trouble, and I
2 believe that was after the third shot was fired.

3 MR. LIEBELER: Your impression of where the shots came
4 from was much the result of the activity near number seven?

5 MR. TEAGUE: Not when I heard the shots.

6 MR. LIEBELER: You thought they had come from the area
7 between number seven and five?

8 MR. TEAGUE: I believe they came from up in here.

9 MR. LIEBELER: Back in the area C?

10 MR. TEAGUE: Right.

11 MR. LIEBELER: Behind the concrete monument here between
12 five and seven, toward the general area of C?

13 MR. TEAGUE: Yes.

14 MR. LIEBELER: Did you look up near the railroad tracks
15 in that area after you heard the shots?

16 MR. TEAGUE: I looked all around. I looked at the
17 complete area to try to find out where the disturbance was.
18 And for some reason, after the third shot, I believe I
19 ducked down back in here.

20 MR. LIEBELER: Under the railroad tracks?

21 MR. TEAGUE: Right. Behind an abutment. And when I
22 stuck my head outside, the Secret Service car was just start-
23 ing to pass under the underpass.

24 MR. LIEBELER: The car immediately behind the President.

25 ~~I don't think I have any additional questions. Let me ask~~

1 you, did you see any evidence of anybody having fired from
2 the area on the railroad tracks above the Triple Underpass?

3 MR. TEAGUE: None.

4 MR. LIEBELER: Do you think that it is consistent with
5 what you heard and saw that day, that the shots could have
6 come from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository?

7 MR. TEAGUE: Yes.

8 MR. LIEBELER: There was in fact a considerable echo in
9 that area?

10 MR. TEAGUE: There was no echo from where I stood. I
11 was asked this question before, and there was no echo.

12 It was just a loud, oh, not a cannon, but definitely
13 louder and more solid than a rifle shot.

14 MR. LIEBELER: So you, being in a place where there was
15 no echo, you were able to recognize how many shots there
16 were quite clearly?

17 MR. TEAGUE: I believe so.

18 MR. LIEBELER: And you say you heard three shots?

19 MR. TEAGUE: That is right.

20 MR. LIEBELER: There has been considerable testimony
21 from people who were standing up near the corner of Elm
22 Street and Houston that it was hard to tell, but of course,
23 you were standing completely across the plaza?

24 MR. TEAGUE: I can't recall any echo, not at all.

25 MR. LIEBELER: Do you remember seeing anything else
or observing anything else that day that you think would

1 be helpful to the Commission, that I haven't asked you about?

2 MR. TEAGUE: Not that I can think of. There is lots
3 of things that you recall about something like that, that you
4 don't recall for certain. What struck me the most was that
5 everybody said all three shots were accounted for. I felt
6 very strongly that the third shot hit down there, and there
7 was the deputy sheriff and the patrolman down under the
8 bridge right there with me.

9 MR. LIEBELER: Now you say you thought it was the third
10 shot that hit down there?

11 MR. TEAGUE: No. I said I thought that all three. All
12 the newspaper accounts for months said all the shots were
13 accounted for. *shots were accounted for*

14 MR. LIEBELER: In terms of hitting in the car?

15 MR. TEAGUE: Hitting into the car, yes.

16 MR. LIEBELER: Well, there was a story in the paper more
17 recently that indicated that one of them might have missed.

18 MR. TEAGUE: That's right.

19 MR. LIEBELER: Did you see that?

20 MR. TEAGUE: That's right, yes.

21 MR. LIEBELER: Other than that, is there anything that
22 you can think of that you think the Commission should know
23 about of what you heard and saw that day?

24 MR. TEAGUE: No, I don't know a thing. The only thing
25 that I saw that I thought was wrong was that there was about

1 five or six or seven minutes in there before anybody done
2 anything about anything.

3 MR. LIEBELER: That was after the shots were fired?

4 MR. TEAGUE: That was after the shots were fired.

5 MR. LIEBELER: What do you mean, "Before they did any-
6 thing"?

7 MR. TEAGUE: There was no action taken except for the
8 one policeman that I could see that stopped his motorcycle,
9 and it fell over on him at first, and he got it standing up-
10 right and drew his gun, and he was the only one doing any-
11 thing about it.

12 MR. LIEBELER: You didn't see any other policemen around
13 in the area?

14 MR. TEAGUE: Not for four or five minutes.

15 *If* Oswald was in that building. He had all the time in the
16 world to calmly walk out of there.

17 MR. LIEBELER: Apparently that is just what he did do.
18 Well, if you can't think of anything else, Mr. Teague, I
19 want to thank you for coming in and for the cooperation you
20 have given us. We appreciate it very much.

21 MR. TEAGUE: Okay.

22

23

(DEPOSITION CONCLUDED)

24

25

James Thomas Teague
James Thomas Teague.

TAGUE