

copy to = H. WEISBERG

THE DEALEY PLAZA ECHO - VOL. 2, #1 - MARCH 1998

Tippit: After The Murder

by Bill Drenas

(Editorial Note: I first "met" the author of this article through the Internet following the publication of his J.D. Tippit Timeline "Car 10 Where Are You" in August 1997. That paper appeared on the John McAdams web page and it immediately struck me as the most comprehensive account of Tippit's death and the few hours preceding it that I had ever read. Bill and I then corresponded regularly and I like to think that I was partly instrumental in arranging his participation at the 1997 JFK-Lancer Conference in Dallas. The article which follows was originally written exclusively for The Dealey Plaza Echo and it was on this that Bill's excellent paper at the Dallas conference was based. I would point out that this article first appeared in The Assassination Chronicles, Vol. 3, Issue 3, Fall 1997 and it appears here with permission.

Whether the Tippit killing is one of your particular interests, or if you have never really studied it in depth, I feel sure that you will gain a lot from what follows! - Ed.)

At the 10th and Patton murder scene

Since publishing my *J.D. Tippit Timeline "Car 10 Where Are You?"* on the Internet, I have received many emails with wonderful compliments and additional Tippit questions. It seems that many of the questions in the Tippit case have never been explained in detail and many readers are confused about certain issues. Two of the questions I am most frequently asked are "Why are there no photographs of Tippit's body?" and "Why are there no photographs of the chalk outline of his body at the scene of the murder?" On the surface, it may appear that something sinister is going on but the actual explanation is very simple - as I will explain.

At the time that Tippit was shot and killed in the street outside 404 East 10th Street, Oak Cliff, most of the Dallas Police patrol cars assigned to Oak Cliff were in the area of the Texas School Book Depository (1). They had been dispatched there at 12.45pm after the report of the President being shot. Many of them were still there at 1.16pm when a call came over the police radio from a private citizen stating: "There's been a shooting out here." (2) That citizen was T.F. Bowley (3). His is the voice heard on the audio copy of

the DPD tapes, not that of Domingo Benevides, who had mistakenly been credited with making the call.

While Bowley was giving the police dispatcher the location of the shooting, Mrs. Frank Wright was also acting quickly. Mrs. Wright and her husband lived at 501 East 10th Street - about half a block from the shooting. Although Mrs. Wright never testified before the Warren Commission she was interviewed by George and Patricia Nash for their article in *The New Leader* magazine of 12th October 1964. She stated: "I heard three shots. From my window I got a clear view of

a man lying there on the street. I didn't wait a minute. I ran to the telephone. I didn't look in the book or anything. I ran to the telephone, picked it up and dialled 0. I said 'Call the police, a man's been shot.' After that I went outside to join my husband. It wasn't but a minute till the ambulance got there."

When the operator forwarded Mrs. Wright's call to the police, they in turn pushed a button connecting them by direct line to the ambulance dispatcher. Study of the DPD radio logs indicates that initially there was



The Dudley M Hughes Funeral Home - 400 East Jefferson Boulevard - (Photograph Ian Griggs 18/11/97)

age 6

page

25

et



The 1963 Tippit Residence - 238 Glencairn Drive - Photograph Ian Griggs (18/11/97)

some confusion about the actual location of the shooting. There was no confusion for the ambulance personnel that picked up Tippit's body, however, because Mrs. Wright's call had bypassed the police radio dispatcher. By this time, the police dispatcher was giving out three different locations for the shooting - 510 East Jefferson, 501 East 10th Street and 501 East Jefferson (4).

The Dudley M. Hughes Funeral Home

The ambulance reached the murder scene so quickly simply because the central ambulance dispatching point for southern Dallas was only about three blocks away. It was, and still is, the Dudley M. Hughes Funeral Home, located at 400 East Jefferson Boulevard (5). The funeral home is directly across the street from the Texaco gas station behind which Oswald allegedly ducked before discarding his zipper jacket (6).

Dudley M. Hughes, Jr. took the call from the police and he immediately filled out the ambulance call slip and put it through the time clock where it was stamped at 1.18pm. Hughes then dispatched ambulance driver Clayton J. Butler, Jr. and assistant Eddie Kinsley to the scene. The speed with which they reached the scene can be

arrival at 1.18pm, within a minute of leaving the funeral home (7).

At 1.18pm. most of the police who eventually responded to this shooting were just learning of it or were just starting to leave Dealey Plaza for the murder scene at Oak Cliff (8).

In 1977, ambulance driver Clayton Butler was interviewed by investigators for the House Select Committee on Assassinations. When asked how long it took him to reach the scene, he replied: "I was on the scene one minute or less. From the time we received the call in our dispatch office until Officer Tippit was pronounced dead at Methodist Hospital was approximately four minutes." From the initial call at 1.18pm, that indicates the ambulance arriving at the hospital at about 1.22pm.

Just who was this?

Ambulance attendant Eddie Kinsley gave two interviews, in 1978 and 1981, in which he told a very important story that could perhaps place Lee Harvey Oswald very close to the murder scene. He explained that as the ambulance was leaving to go on the Tippit shooting call a man ran in front of the vehicle directly in front of the Hughes Funeral Home. This was despite the fact that at this time the

ambulance had its red emergency lights operating and its siren blaring.

According to Kinsley: "He came out from behind the Texaco station, and he was on the median (the median strip running down the centre of East Jefferson Boulevard in front of the Hughes Funeral Home) and he ran across in front of us we (Kinsley and Butler) were downgrading him for running across in front of us. You know, how stupid. Anyone seeing red lights and siren on the ambulance - and still run out in front of you. And we didn't know who he was from Adam until we got back to the funeral home. And it was on TV, showing the Texas Theatre where he was wrestling with the policeman. And we said 'Well, that's the fool we'd like to hit. (because he ran out in front of the ambulance) He was heading for the library.'" (situated at the corner of East Jefferson and Marsalis.) (9)

If Kinsley's statements were true and accurate, then he witnessed the assailant going on East Jefferson towards the library at the corner of East Jefferson and Marsalis. That is in totally the opposite direction to the Texas Theatre where Oswald was later arrested. The theatre is six tenths of a mile west of the funeral home (10). Could it be possible that Kinsley mistook the library employee who ran excitedly into the library to tell people about the President being shot as the man who ran in front of the ambulance? This man was mistaken as the Tippit assailant by the police at 1.34pm. If this was the same man it does not fit the timeframe because there is a gap of about 16 minutes between the man running in front of the ambulance (1.18pm) and the call for the police to investigate the library (1.34pm). The library was situated at 542 East Jefferson, which is about two blocks from the Hughes Funeral Home. (The library currently at that location is not the 1963 building but a new library rebuilt on the same spot at a later date - Ed.)

When Clayton Butler was asked if he recognized the man who ran in front of the ambulance as Oswald he replied: "No sir, I could not positively identify him. It very possibly could have been Oswald because I was

wat
kno

Unc
poli
sces
bod
exa
arri
ass:
loa:
anc
Oai
"D
Lig

By
rea
1.2
pre
ho
sir
the
qu
m:
th:
af
Tl
w
w

It
w
tl
b
tl
h
tl
e
s
t
r
V
c
i
h
l
t
l
:

App

1 emergency
ren blaring.

He came out
station, and
(the median
entre of East
and he run
we (Kinsley
iding him for
of us. You
e seeing red
ambulance -
of you. And
e was from
the funeral
showing the
as wrestling
e said 'Well,
it. (because
ambulance)
ie library."
r of East
)

re true and
essed the
Jefferson
corner of
s. That is in
tion to the
ld was later
tenths of a
home (10).
it Kensley
ee who ran
tell people
shot as the
t of the
mistaken as
police at
me man it
e because
6 minutes
in front of
ld the call
the library
situated at
about two
s Funeral
tly at that
ding but a
me spot at

sked if he
n in front
swald he
positively
bly could
se I was

watching traffic." (11) We may never know who it was for sure.

Under normal circumstances, if the police had arrived first at the murder scene, they would have kept Tippit's body there for photographs and scene examination. Because the ambulance arrived first, Butler and Kinsley, assisted by Bowley, (12) basically just loaded the body into the ambulance and rushed it to Methodist Hospital, Oak Cliff where Tippit was declared "Dead On Arrival" by Dr. Richard Liguori at 1.30pm. (13)

By the time the first police unit reached the murder scene it was 1.22pm (14) and the ambulance was probably at, or approaching, the hospital. To explain it briefly and simply, the ambulance was close to the murder scene and responded very quickly whereas the police units were much further away and only reached the murder scene about four minutes after Tippit's body had been removed. Those straightforward facts explain why no photographs of the corpse were taken.

Examining the suggested body switch

It has been stated that Tippit's body was lost for an hour and that during this time, conspirators switched the body of the dead police officer with that of the late President. Could this have happened? In order to deal with this question objectively I set out to establish a "chain of possession" (so to speak) of Tippit's body. I also set up a timeline of events after the Tippit murder.

We have already established from official documentation and eyewitness interviews that a Hughes Funeral Home ambulance with attendants Butler and Kinsley picked up Tippit's body from the murder scene. This information is corroborated by witnesses at the murder scene. As the ambulance raced to Methodist Hospital a Dallas Police car with Patrolman R.A Davenport (a Traffic Division School Safety Officer) and another (unidentified) officer were racing over the Houston Street Viaduct towards the Tippit shooting scene when the ambulance carrying Tippit's body passed in front of them

at the intersection of Zangs Boulevard and Colorado. At this point, Davenport's car followed the ambulance to Methodist Hospital.

Davenport has stated: "I didn't know who it was at first and then when they started unloading him I saw that it was Tippit." Davenport knew Tippit personally because they had gone through police training school together. According to Davenport's Supplemental Offense Report (15): "We assisted in getting the officer to the Emergency Room and observed the doctors and nurses trying to bring the officer back to life." At 1.30pm, Officer J.D. Tippit was pronounced dead by Dr. Richard Liguori. Davenport also stated: "By request of Captain Talbert, Dr. Paul Moellenhoff removed a bullet from Officer Tippit's stomach so identification could be made as to the caliber of the gun used in the shooting." (16) This also explains why bullets were removed from Tippit at two different locations, Methodist Hospital and Parkland Hospital, as stated in his Autopsy Report written up by Dr. Earl Rose.

These statements about the Methodist Hospital activities regarding Tippit are verified by comments made in an interview of Emergency Room nurse Lotti Thompson. Because most of the police officers were still at the Texas School Book Depository or at the Tippit murder scene, Tippit's body remained at Methodist Hospital until after Oswald was arrested at the Texas Theatre at about 1.50pm. Tippit's supervisor, Sergeant Calvin 'Bud' Owens, was en route to Methodist Hospital at 2.02pm. (17) In Sergeant Owens' Warren Commission testimony, he stated: "I left the scene (Tippit murder) and went to Methodist Hospital where Officer Tippit had been taken, and I was taken to the room where he was taken." Sergeant Owens briefly examined Tippit's body. He then went on to say: "I remained at the hospital for quite a time and then I went back to the Oak Cliff substation where I was assigned."

According to Clayton Butler's HSCA interview: "We were given permission from the Dallas Police Department to move Officer Tippit's body to Parkland Memorial Hospital for an

autopsy. Upon arrival at Parkland Hospital all streets leading into the hospital were barricaded and manned by uniformed officers. We had to show that we had a Dallas Police Officer in our ambulance before we were permitted to proceed to the hospital. We went through normal DOA procedures set forth by Parkland Hospital in placing Officer Tippit's body in the County Morgue."

According to the Dallas Police Homicide Report of Officer J.D. Tippit: "Judge Joe B. Brown ordered autopsy, transferred to Parkland Hospital." (18) Using the best documentation this transfer could have taken place somewhere between 2.15pm and 2.30pm. The Autopsy Report is signed by Dr. Earl Rose at 3.15pm 11/22/63. Given travel time from Methodist Hospital to Parkland Hospital and allowing time for the DOA paperwork procedures this timeframe seems logical.

In Darwin Payne's book *Reporting the Kennedy Assassination* we find additional confirmation of Tippit's body arriving at Parkland by KBOX radio reporter Ron McAllister Jenkins. Jenkins was trying to get into the Parkland Hospital Emergency Room but he found it impossible as every entrance was sealed off. He recalled: "Since that was part of my beat too I finally figured out I'd go around to what they called the DOA room. And I quickly scooted around to the back side and came in the back door. And the lady who ran the desk was named Fern Elliott. I'm sure a lot of reporters will remember her. And I asked her 'Fern, do you know what's going on?' and she said 'No, they are not telling me a thing.' And I stayed in the office there, and while I was in there, this was some time later, they wheeled in a body and one of the ambulance drivers that I knew at that time said: 'His name is Tippit.'"

The switch could not have taken place

It is highly unlikely that a body switch could have taken place in Dallas since the two bodies were never close to one another at Parkland. The hearse with President Kennedy's body left Parkland for Love Field at 2.08pm. This is about the time that Sergeant

THE DEALEY PLAZA ECHO

Owens was arriving at Methodist Hospital to view Tippit's body, a fact that is corroborated by several witnesses there. So, without reviewing the discrepancies in physical appearance and medical evidence of the two bodies, and unless all the people mentioned were involved in a massive conspiracy, it is impossible to understand how a body swap could have taken place.

Sources and Endnotes

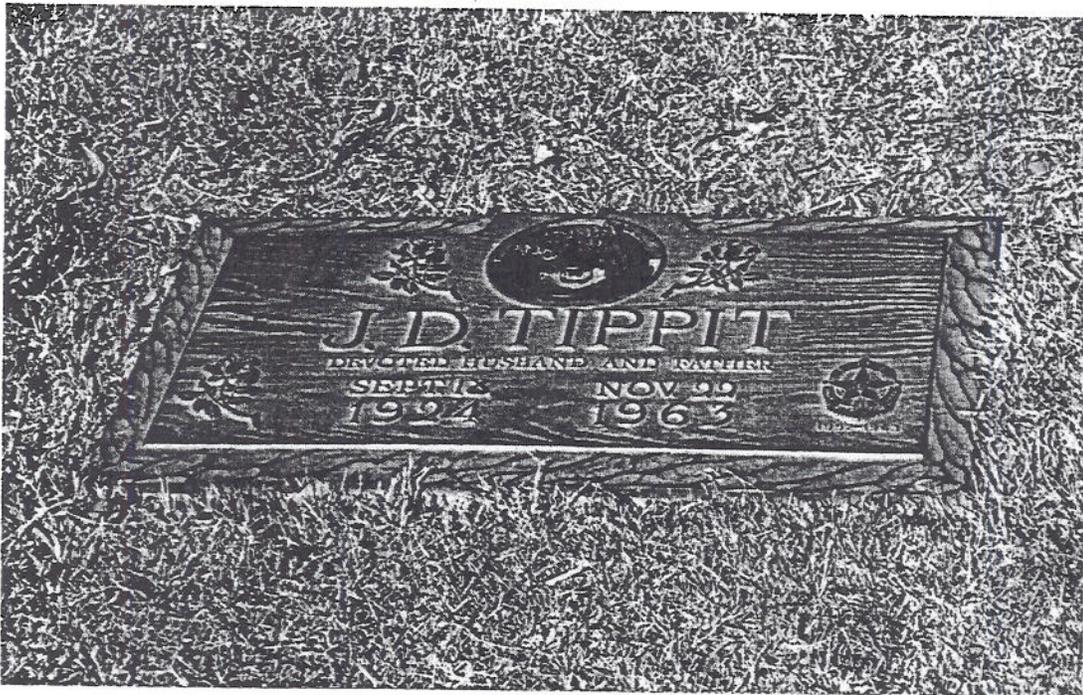
1. Kimbrough/Shearer DPD radio transcripts.
2. *ibid*, transmission 900.
3. Affidavit of T.F. Bowley, 2nd December 1963 (Commission Exhibit 2003, page 11 of exhibit - 24H 202).

4. Kimbrough/Shearer; transmissions 905, 914, 932, 941.
5. See location map opposite.
6. Warren Commission Report, pages 175-176.
7. Interview of Clayton J. Butler, Jr. - HSCA 180-10107-10180.
8. Kimbrough/Shearer; transmissions 920, 925, 933, 943.
9. See location map opposite.
10. See location map opposite.
11. 1981 interview of Clayton J. Butler, Jr.
12. Affidavit of T.F. Bowley, 2nd December 1963.
13. Dallas Police Department Homicide Report of Patrolman J.D.

Tippit (see Jesse Curry, *Personal JFK Assassination File*, self-published 1969: page 84).

14. Kimbrough/Shearer; transmission 1011.
15. 1982 interview with Patrolman R.A. Davenport.
16. HSCA 180-10119-10049.
17. Kimbrough/Shearer; transmissions 1670, 1671.
18. As 13 above.

Bill Drenas,
12 Carroll Parkway,
Lowell,
MA 01851
United States of America



Personal JFK
self-published

transmission

th Patrolman

049.

transmissions

