

AT THE SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY - THE BAK

Statement of Witnesses - Troy Eugene WEST, April 8, 1964, 6 H 356-63

West is a 57-year-old, 16-year employee of the Texas School Book Depository who is employed as a mail wrapper. He customarily got to work about 10 minutes before 1/8 and ~~1/2~~ always made a pot of coffee as soon as he got there. He worked on the first floor and rarely left it. He describes the place he works as in about the middle of the west wall.

Of Oswald, he said he "never did stop to get any", referring to coffee (p.358).

Of the story of Oswald working in a T-shirt, West said, "I don't believe I ever seen him working in just a T-shirt. He worked in his shirt all right, but I never did see him work in a T-shirt." (p.359)

Larry, the following lengthy excerpt is important because it bears on the possibility of Oswald's having taken the materials home to make the bag. This man even ate lunch where he worked. There is an ambiguity, which the Commission makes no effort to clear up, in West's saying employees could get some tape for themselves. There is no reason to presume West meant without his knowledge. There is <sup>every</sup> ~~other~~ reasons to presume he meant to say, Ask him for some, he would give it.

"Mr. West. I am the only one that is steady, wraps mail all the time, although I have help, you know, when it gets stacked.

Mr. Belin. Did Lee Harvey Oswald ever help you wrap mail?

Mr. West. No, sir; he never did.

Mr. Belin. Do you know whether or not he ever borrowed or used any wrapping paper for himself?

Mr. West. No, sir; I don't/

Mr. Belin. You don't know?

Mr. West. No; I don't.

Mr. Belin. Did you ever see him around these wrapper rolls or

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wrapper roll machines, or not?

Mr. West. No, sir; I never noticed him being around.

Mr. Belin. Are they paper machines with the rolls of wrapping paper? You have some gum there too, for taping it? When you wrap it, would you tape it with some tape?

Mr. West. No, sir; I never seen him.

Mr. Belin. Did you do that? Did you put tape on the wrapping paper when it was being shipped? When you wrap the books up with wrapping paper, did you have any gum tape that you put on it?

Mr. West. No, sir; I had a machine that I placed it on the machine and tied it with, and the machine tied it with a string.

Mr. Belin. With string?

Mr. West. Yes, sir.

Mr. Belin. Didn't you have any gummed tape by your machine?

Mr. West. Sir?

Mr. Belin. Did you have any kind of a tape, sticky tape that you would put on the paper to keep it together, or was that somewhere else?

Mr. West. Oh, yes, sir; I used some of that wide tape.

Mr. Belin. Is that sticky tape?

Mr. West. Yes, sir.

Mr. Belin. To seal the package with?

Mr. West. Yes, sir; that's right. And then I tie it, put it on the machine and then tie it.

Mr. Belin. Is yours the only place that they have the sticky tape?

Mr. West. Well, that is the only place that is supposed to be, you know. (p.360)

Mr. Belin. Could other employees come and pick up some of the tape for themselves?

Mr. West. Yes, sir; they could come get it if they wanted to use

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it, but all the time it was there where it is supposed to be.

Mr. Belin. Did other employees from time to time come and borrow some of that tape at all, or use it? Would other employees ever use any of that tape for themselves?

Mr. West. Not as I know of now." (p.361)

And the purpose of the following excerpt, Larry, is to illustrate what I believe I told you, that if you run the tape through the machine and cut it with the cutting edge of the machine, the machine leaves a mark on it. I believe discussion of the bag shows this mark on some ends of the tape but not others. The point is, that if you have the tape cut by the machine, the tape has run through the machine and is wet and cannot be transported. If you take the tape out of the machine and take a piece of the tape from the roll, you do not have the machine mark. I am inferring that the bag was fabricated inside the Book Depository.

"Mr. Belin. If I wanted to pull the tape, pull off a piece without getting water on it, would I just <sup>lift it</sup> ~~lift~~ up without going over the wet roller and get the tape without getting it wet?

Mr. West. You would have to take it out. You would have to take it out of the machine. See, it's put on there and then run through a little clamp that holds it down, and you pull it, well, then the water, it gets water on it." (p.361)

The following excerpt bears on the acuteness of West's recollection, or his willingness to recall and become involved. If he was as he said he usually was, at his wrapping table, the inference of the questioning is he would have had to have seen these men.

"Mr. Belin. Do you remember any of the men coming down the elevator that day? Bonnie Ray Williams or James Jarman, Jr., or Danny Arce,



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or any one else coming down that morning? Charlie Givens? Do you remember them coming down the elevator, or don't you remember?

Mr. West. I don't remember." (p.361)

Without anything being left out, the next excerpt follows immediately:

"Mr. Belin. Now, after you quit for lunch, you made the coffee then?

Mr. West. Yes, sir.

Mr. Belin. Where did you make the coffee?

Mr. West. I made the coffee right there close to the wrapping mail table where I wrap mail.

Mr. Belin. Then what did you do?

Mr. West. Well, I <sup>sit</sup> /down to eat my lunch.

Mr. Belin. Then what did you do?

Mr. West. Well, I had just, after I made coffee, I just had started to eat my lunch because I was a little hungry - I didn't eat anything that morning before I went to work - and I had started to eat my lunch. But before I got through, well, all of this was, I mean, the police and things was coming in, and I was just spellbound. I just didn't know what was the matter. So I didn't get through eating. I had to eat about half my lunch, and that is all." (p.361)

This shows that West did remain at his wrapping table.

With regard to the last paragraph, it would seem obvious that Belin should have asked West what he did with the rest of his 45-minute lunch period. It would seem that at least the first half-hour of it, especially when he was hungry, should be accounted for.

And bearing on either West's credibility as a witness or his hearing:

"Mr. Belin. Did you hear any shots fired?

Mr. West. I didn't hear a one. Didn't hear a one." (p.361)

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This just is not believable. Unless something sinister is involved, I believe West just wanted to keep out of the whole thing. Of course, there is always the problem of intelligence; maybe his is limited. (p.361)

And the following excerpt again relates to his credibility as a witness, his willingness to become involved, or his intelligence:

"Mr. West. Yes, sir; I think he came in with the police.

Mr. Belin. Was he one of the first people in, or did other people come in ahead of him, if you remember?

Mr. West. Really, I just don't know.

Mr. Belin. That is okay if you don't remember. That is all I want you to say if you don't remember. Did you hear anyone yelling to let the elevator loose or anything like that?

Mr. West. I can't remember." (p.362)

This quotation illustrates what I said earlier about his rarely leaving ~~leaving~~ his place of work: "No, sir; I never did hardly ever leave the first floor. That is just I stayed there where all my work was, and I just stayed there." (p.362) He said that, especially on the 22nd, "I never did leave the first floor".