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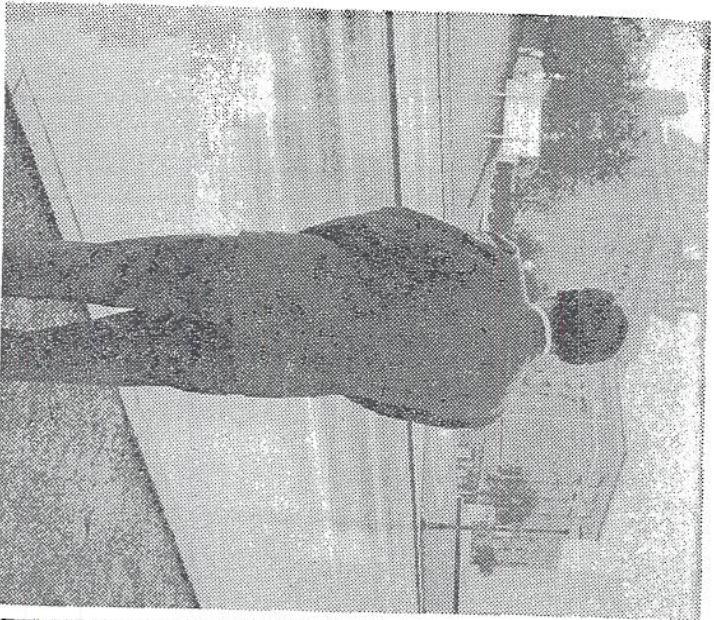
• • Vol. 42, No. 31, April 7, 1968

**Whatever Happened to
The Dead End Kids?**

EXCLUSIVE

MAN WOUNDED IN ASSASSINATION OF JEK FINALLY TALKS

— A few minutes after the shooting, while blood was still streaming from the wound in my face, I showed police the mark on a curb where a bullet or bullet fragment hit near me. (Continued in centerfold)



WOUNDED HERE: James Tague, facing Book Depository, poses on narrow island where he was standing when he was struck in the cheek.

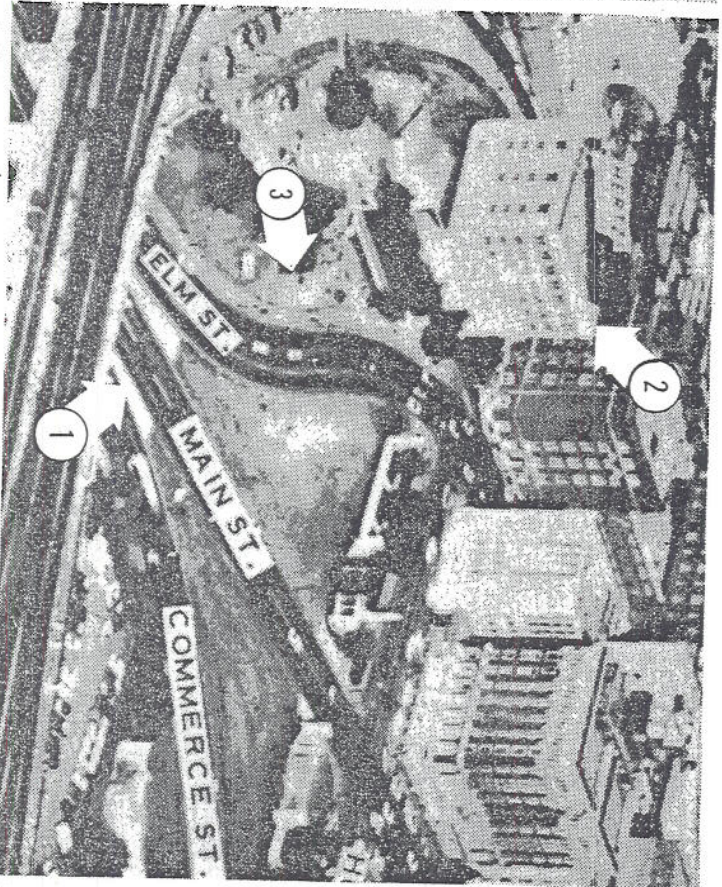
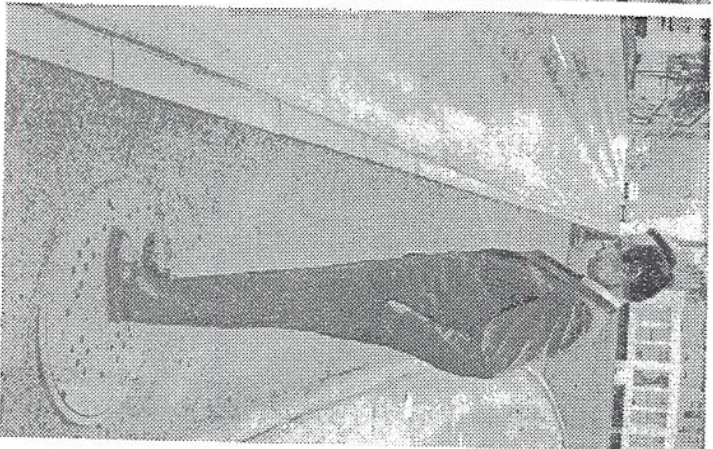


DIAGRAM OF DEALEY PLAZA in downtown Dallas, where Tague watched the Presidential motorcade. No. 1: Spot where Tague was standing; No. 2: Texas School Book Depository; No. 3: The park.



NEW CURB: Tague looks down new section of curb that replaced damaged by bullet.

It might have indicated that all the shots were not fired by Lee Harvey Oswald from the window of the Texas School Book Depository.

But it was three months before the Secret Service got around to investigating the mark - and even then they went to the wrong piece of curb.

By the time the FBI subjected the mark to laboratory analysis, the wind and weather had done their worst to it.

And when FBI agents eventually talked to me they were more interested in my casual acquaintance with Oswald's killer, Jack Ruby, than the evidence I could give on the Kennedy shooting.

Then I found that my eyewitness impressions given to the Warren Commission were pushed and pulled around to make them conform to the one-assassin theory. I can't go for that theory.

From the caliber of police work I saw, the Warren Report settles nothing.

The investigation into President Kennedy's assassination must rank as the sloppiest piece of detective work in modern history.

Let's start at the beginning, and then judge for yourself.

I was 27 years old, that fatal Friday in Dallas. I was an Indiana farm boy turned automobile sales-

man, and I had nothing more serious on my mind that day than taking my girl out to lunch.

But I should mention one background fact: As a youngster I liked hunting and gained a fair understanding of firearms; later in the Air Force, I qualified as an expert marksman. By mentioning this I am not setting myself up as an authority, just trying to make it plain that guns had been part of my life and I was not quite a stranger to them.

It was the sheerest chance that posted me where I was that day. I had not planned to watch the Presidential procession. My route to downtown Dallas, where my fiancée worked in a brokerage office, led me into the heavy traffic caused by the approaching motorcade.

In fact the traffic jam was so bad that on Commerce St., where three

streets come together in the triple underpass, I was forced to a complete stop.

I waited a few minutes, impatiently, for things to get started again. Then it became clear there was no hope of traffic moving until the President went past. So, like several other motorists caught in the same way, I gave in. I left my car, with its nose just out of the underpass, and got out so I could catch a glimpse of the President.

I had to walk only a few feet to have a full view of Dealey Plaza. Looming ahead was the Texas School Book Depository which overlooks the Elm St. intersection. The lead cars of the procession were already turning into the intersection.

To my left, paralleling the north side of Elm St., was a terraced park, sloping up steeply to conceal the ugliness of a railroad yard beyond. The park was pleasantly landscaped and dotted with colonnades, masonry walls and pillars. In the center was a large gazebo, an ornamental pavilion.

Not many spectators were near me, except for other motorists trapped as I

was. But many were watching from the slope of the park, the north curb of Elm St. and in front of the Depository.

I stood on a narrow concrete island where Commerce and Main Sts. run side by side.

The Hertz Rent-a-Car clock on top of the Depository building read just 12:29 p.m., I noted absently, as I tried to pick out the President's open-top car 300 feet away. I wondered if my girl friend had gone to lunch without me.

One of the limousines made the sharp turn into Elm St., and fluttering hands from the curb identified it as the President's car. But my eyes never had a chance to seek out Kennedy.

There was a loud report, a sharp sudden crackle of sound that seemed to linger in the air.

A gunshot, I thought; but not necessarily from a rifle. It passed fleetingly through my mind that perhaps there was some disturbance in the crowd and an eager-beaver officer had fired a warning-shot in the air.

But the sound didn't seem exactly right for that. There had to be some other explanation. My gaze swept over

the rows of faces on the distant curb. Then it darted on to the grassy slope, taking in the masonry which had spectators perching on it or leaning against it.

Restlessly I moved a step or two. One foot struck the metallic cover of a sewer manhole.

Then there was a second blast, louder and even more distinct, as if from closer range.

At that instant I was facing the gazebo. My attention was so caught up that I was only dimly aware of a stinging sensation in my right cheek.

Then a third report followed quickly, not waiting - as the second one had - until the previous one died away.

By now there was a great flurry of movement. It seemed most frenzied in the center of the park. People were running in all directions, some up the slope, some down. Some fell flat and hugged the ground.

Somehow at the moment, sound didn't register with me. I know that people were moaning, swearing, crying out, but to me it was like an old-time silent movie. Faces were contorted in shock, fear and bewilderment, mouths were moving, but I didn't hear what they were saying.

But all the motion must have infected me with activity. I found I was retreating, moving to the underpass abutment nearest to my parked car.

This seems like a strange choice of shelter. It would give me protection from the center of the park - but not from the Book Depository!

Yet it was my instinctive line of re-

Why He Finally Talked

Here, in his own words, is why James Tague finally decided to tell his story to The ENQUIRER.

"Soon after the Warren Commission report was released in September 1964, I had good reason to feel glad I had stayed clear of the whole mess.

"Because many other witnesses were being subjected to crank calls and letters, and spiteful reprisals for having testified.

"Worse yet, the death toll of persons connected with the case rose steadily until it reached about two dozen.

"Reading about such things worried me.

"I wouldn't say that I deliberately hid out — but unconsciously that is just what I did.

"I kept an unlisted telephone. I always lived in apartment complexes, where people seldom know their neighbors, and where my name would not be on utility company records or real estate tax roles.

"And I kept moving about, never leaving a forwarding address.

"Then one day in January, 1968, I was startled to learn how thoroughly I had covered my tracks. A national magazine had set out to locate me for an interview, but ran into a stone wall. They couldn't find a trace of me.

"The magazine's ensuing article featured me as a mysterious 'third victim' — my whereabouts unknown to anyone since my appearance before the Warren Commission three and a half years before.

"The writer wondered aloud about my fate and, in view of the raging controversy over the Commission Report, why I 'chose silence.'

"Silence? That made me laugh.

"So I decided then to make an effort to tell my story, and to give my impressions of what happened that dreadful day in Dallas.

"I chose The ENQUIRER for this exclusive account for good reason: Because The ENQUIRER already had demonstrated a willingness to take an impartial stand concerning the assassination — and had not meekly accepted the official cut-and-dried version.

"I felt The ENQUIRER would truthfully present my full story to the American public."



CHAOS: As spectators panic and fall to the ground, a motorcycle officer (arrow) and a patrolman head toward knoll in background.



SPECTATORS HUG GROUND as motorcycle cops speed toward triple underpass moments after sniper's bullet killed Kennedy. Park is at left.



KILLED: John F. Kennedy, President of the U.S.



WOUNDED: John Connally, Governor of Texas.



WOUNDED: James Taggart, an automobile salesman.

treat. I think there is some meaning in this.

I cowered there for a few seconds. In that time my sense of hearing began functioning again. I could hear car motors starting to roar, the staccato of the escort motorcycles, and finally the overriding banshee wail of a siren.

I stepped back into the open just as the speeding Secret Service car plunged into the tunnel beneath the overpass and disappeared.

Everything was still a tumult. People were flitting around purposefully or aimlessly. Some, I'm sure, thought there was still danger of being mowed down by guns.

I walked up the grassy area which separates the streets, still unsure just what was going on.

I called out to the first man I passed. The way his facial muscles were twitching made clear he was fighting a losing battle with panic. He didn't

answer me, because he was just shrilling out the same question — "What's going on?" — to someone else.

A motorcycle officer roared down from the intersection. He tried to park at the curb in front of the gazebo. In his haste the motorcycle fell over. He didn't stop to straighten it, but went running up the slope, drawing his gun as he ran. He disappeared into the railroad yard.

In the grassy plot between Elm and Main, a plainclothes deputy was minutely scanning the ground. Plainly he was looking for shells, or for tufts of grass kicked up by a misfire.

Only then did it dawn on me that the sting in my cheek had been caused by gunfire.

I started to tell him about my experience. Just then the uniformed cop came back down the slope.

There was a man standing in the street, crying. He was a big fellow dressed in rough work clothes and he was sobbing so hard he could hardly talk.

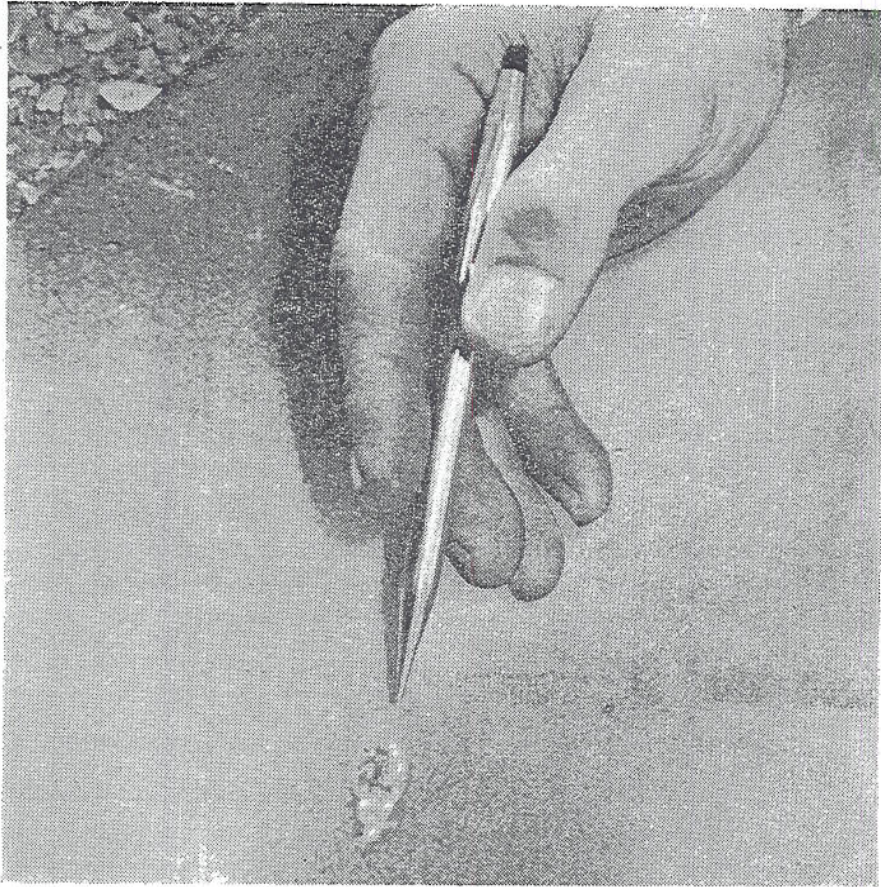
"I saw it!" he whimpered to all of us who were near. "I was right there

Few people realize that a third man was hit when President John F. Kennedy was fatally wounded and Texas Governor John Connally seriously injured in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, on Nov. 22, 1963.

James Tague, struck on the right cheek by either a fragment of bullet or a chip of concrete kicked up by a ricochet, has avoided publicity since the assassination because he believed it would disrupt his personal life.

He believes that his injury and a bullet mark on the curb near where he was standing in Dealey Plaza were vital clues to where the shots were fired from. But his information was ignored by law enforcement agencies until months later — then used by the Warren Commission to tie in with the theory that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin.

Tague is not satisfied with that theory. Now, for the first time, exclusively for ENQUIRER readers, the 31-year-old car salesman tells his full story.



BULLET HOLE: A pencil points to gash in south curb of Main Street, made by bullet fired during JFK's assassination. Photo was taken the next day by Tom Dillard of the Dallas Morning News.

next to his car when it passed. His head exploded. Some of the pieces fell in the street!"

Then he choked up completely. He dropped his face into his ham-like hands and his body began shaking convulsively.

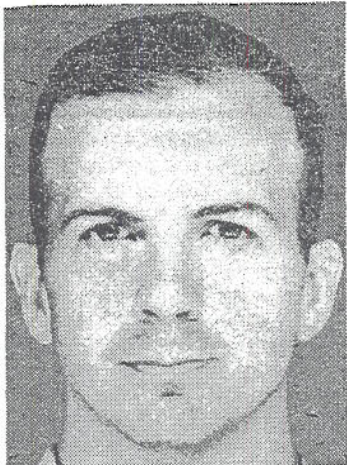
The plainclothes deputy looked at me. His face was the color of ashes.

He said: "You've got blood on your cheek. Where were you standing?"

I took him across Main St. and pointed out the spot. Together we looked around, and then the officer came upon a small broken place in the south curb of Main St., a slight indentation where something had struck forcefully.

He said: "That's it. A bullet hit there, a fragment ricocheting up and striking you."

The place was on the round part of the curb, fresh and not marked by the film of dirt over the nearby areas. And it was



LEE HARVEY OSWALD
He killed President Kennedy.



JACK RUBY
He killed Lee Oswald.

bone-dry, too, in spite of the thundershowers earlier that day.

The deputy tried to circle the place with a ball-point pen, but the pen wouldn't mark.

He said: "We'll remember this location by the manhole cover."

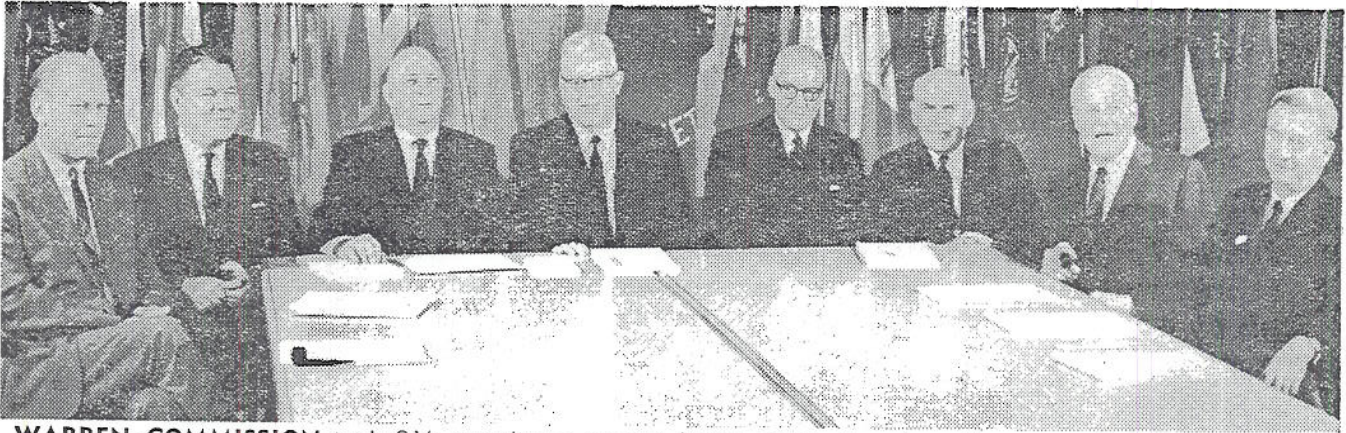
I'm not passing any judgment on this deputy. He was a man trying to do his job, at a moment when lots of others were too panic-stricken to know what they were doing at all.

But I do want to go over part of those few moments again, from his point of view, in his

words. His name is Eddy Raymond Walters. Here is his testimony to Wesley J. Leibeler, assistant counsel of the Warren Commission. I'll just hit the highspots as it is printed in "Hearings Before the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy," Volume VII, beginning on page 546:

WALTERS: "I . . . went over on this grassy area . . . between Elm and Main and starting to looking at the grass to see if some shots had been fired and some of them might have chugged into

(Continued on next page)



WARREN COMMISSION took 8½ months to remove bullet-chipped curb and preserve it as evidence. By then, Tague says, time and erosion had changed scar in concrete.

(Continued from preceding page)

this turf here and it would give an indication if some had really been, if they were really shots and not just blanks or something, and a man, and I couldn't tell you his name if my life depended on it — he had a car parked right here in Main St. lane headed east, just under this underpass.

“... and he came up to me and asked me, he said, ‘Are you looking to see where some bullets may have struck?’

“And I said, ‘Yes.’

“He says, ‘I was standing over by the bank here, right where my car is parked when those shots happened,’ and he said, ‘I don't know where they came from, or if they were shots, but something struck me on the face.’

“... and so I had him show me right where he was standing and I started to search in that immediate area and found a place on the curb there in the Main St. lane there close to the underpass where a projectile had struck that curb.”

LIEBELER: “Would you remember that man's name if I told you or if I reminded you of it?”

WALTHERS: “I'm sorry — I don't know if I would remember it or not.”

LIEBELER: “There is a man by the name of Jim Tague, T-a-g-u-e, who works as an automobile salesman.”

WALTHERS: “I remember he had a gray automobile — I remember that very well.”

LIEBELER: “I think it must have been Mr. Tague because ... he told me his car was parked right there at No. 9 and ... he walked up there and talked to a deputy sheriff and he looked at the curb.”

WALTHERS: “Yes; this was pure ignorance on my part in not getting his name — I don't know — but I

didn't.”

At this point Liebelér told Walthers: “I think it is pretty clear it was Mr. Tague.”

To go on with the story the way it happened: I had followed the deputy back to where the uniformed policeman was standing, and repeated my information. The cop promptly relayed it to his office on his two-way radio.

He told me: “Headquarters wants a full report from you.”

I replied that I would attend to it.

To give the picture from the officer's point of view, I can quote right here from his testimony, as given April 9, 1964, to David W. Belin, assistant counsel of the President's Commission. It starts on page 296 of Volume VI of the Commission hearings. The officer's name is Clyde A. Haygood. He described running up to the railyard and back, and talking to some people. Then:

BELIN: “You talked to any other witnesses there?”

HAYGOOD: “Yes. There was another one came up who was located, at the time he stated, on the south side of Elm St. back toward the triple underpass. Back, well, it would be north of the underpass there, and said he had gotten hit by a piece of concrete or something.

“And he did have a slight cut on his right cheek, upper portion of his cheek just to the right of his nose.”

Later in the interrogation Belin inquired about a radio transmission to the officer from headquarters asking: “How many do you have there?”

Haygood quoted his response to headquarters as: “One guy possibly hit by a ricochet off the concrete and another seen the President slump.”

BELIN: “How many different people did you talk to? One that was possibly hit by a ricochet?”

HAYGOOD: “Piece of concrete.”

BELIN: “Was he the one that saw the President slump?”

HAYGOOD: “No.”

While I'm on the subject of Warren Commission witnesses, let us run through a few others here who back up what I have told.

There is A.J. Millican, reported on page 486 of Volume XIX, who related: "A man standing on the south side of Elm Street, was either hit in the foot, or the ankle and fell down."

He was talking about me; he had seen me stumble as I hurried to take cover.

There is also Mrs. Donald Baker, who saw the bullet strike. Her testimony, given to Liebel, is in Volume VII, starting on page 507.

LIEBELER: "You say you saw something hit the street after you heard the first shot; is that right?"

MRS. BAKER: "Yes."

LIEBELER: "... what did it look like when you saw it?"

MRS. BAKER: "Well, as I said, I thought it was a firecracker. It looked just like you could see the sparks from it . . ."

Then, in Volume XIX, is the statement of Royce Glenn Skelton. I'll quote a line from it:

"I heard a woman sa, (ed. note: say) 'Oh no' or something and grab a man inside the car. I then heard another shot and saw the bullet hit the pavement. The concrete was knocked to the south away from the car.

It hit the pavement in the left or middle lane."

In describing where they were, and the point of view from which they saw what they saw, these witnesses all corroborate my testimony.

Traffic was beginning to move on Commerce St. when I left the scene and I could see my car parked all alone beneath the underpass. I started toward it.

A cluster of motorcycle officers, escorts in the recent motorcade, thundered up from the underpass, traveling the wrong way on Elm St.

People were crying. By now they all knew the President had been shot. And somehow they seemed to know — long before it was announced — that he was dead. Nobody was ashamed of the tears.

Feeling numb, I got into my car. Somewhere behind me a motorist was honking his horn in irritation. I paid no attention, but took my time driving into the center of the city.

When I got downtown I parked and headed into the brokerage office where my fiancee worked as a receptionist.

The office was a madhouse. When news of the shooting went out the market fell like a stone, causing the exchanges to shut down. Now everyone who had a share of stock was calling his broker, demanding to know what

was going to happen next.

My girl friend, answering telephones frantically, glanced up from her switchboard at me and gasped in dismay.

My face was bloody, my suit crumpled and littered with debris. When I had a chance to look at myself in a mirror later, I understood her horror.

I had the feeling of being terribly disorganized. I felt I should be doing something useful, and I wasn't. I phoned my father in Indiana and told him the news.

Then I walked to police headquarters and asked the way to the Homicide Bureau.

In this office there was a peculiar kind of excitement.

Something had gone wrong. Something besides the big, overwhelming thing, the assassination. Something else, and more recent. Detectives were moving around jerkily, speaking to each other in sharp monosyllables. I had trouble getting anyone to understand why I was there.

By the time I was there 10 minutes, I pieced together from words and hints that a patrolman had been murdered in a sleazy residential area.

No one said outright that *this new killing* was linked to the assassination, but I had a feeling these investigators thought it was.

Finally I was shown into an office marked CAPTAIN.

An officer sat behind a desk, scribbling notes in pencil as I talked. He asked if the bullet which hit me came from the School Book Depository building.

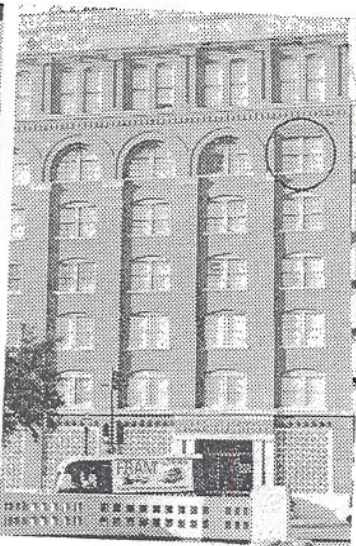
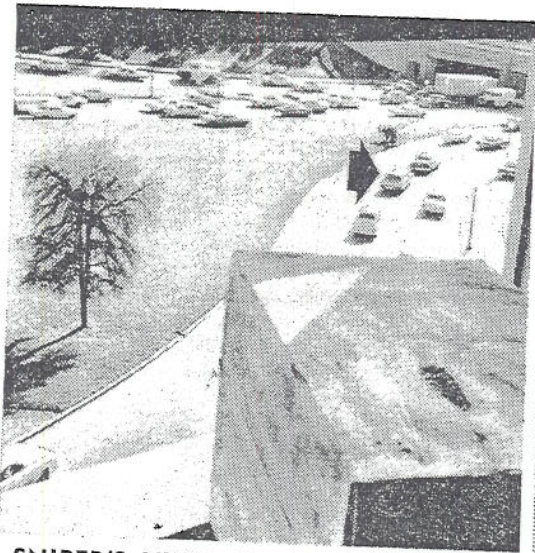
I told him I wasn't sure about this. I had been facing more toward the park, I said. It appeared possible to me it had come from that direction.

The officer listened and made his notes, but he didn't have many questions. His mind seemed only half on what he was doing; he kept glancing over my shoulder as if he expected someone or something.

I volunteered that the break in the curbing might throw some light on the direction of the shot. Its shape suggested that the bullet had been fired from a point north of Elm St. That could take in the Depository; but the angle of impact could indicate a firing point to the left of the Depository. And



PARK GAZEBO: Tague poses before pavilion which he says he was facing when wounded in the cheek.



SNIPER'S VIEW: Carton in Book Depository window was gun rest for rifleman firing toward spot (arrow) where President Kennedy was hit. Photo at right shows window (circled) that the assassin used.

that would open up a whole new area for questions.

I added: "That's about as definite as I can be, but I guess your crime laboratory could find out for sure."

Behind me there was a sudden stampede of footfalls.

A gang of officers, uniformed and plainclothes, were bringing in a prisoner.

My interviewer sprang to his feet, muttering: "That's the guy that shot the patrolman!"

Flashbulbs were popping, newsmen were yelling questions.

The prisoner was a young fellow. He looked as if he'd been having a rough time. It seemed plain to me that somebody had laid one into the side of his face. His hair was mussed, his clothes ruffled.

Through the plate glass window separating me from the main room, I saw him sit down. The officer who

(Continued on next page)

April

(Continued from preceding page)

had interviewed me headed in that direction, brushing by me. He flung back a few words to me over his shoulder, by way of farewell: "We'll be in touch."

I started to leave. It was difficult getting out through the door, because dozens of newsmen were pressed against it.

I remember I heard someone say: "That guy they arrested is named Oswald. Lee Harvey Oswald."

There is no reference to this little homicide bureau interview of mine in the Warren Commission testimony.

The story of what happened to me in Dealey Plaza is taken care of in two or three paragraphs in the official Report of the President's Commission, on page 116 of the Doubleday edition:

"Some evidence suggests that a third shot may have entirely missed and hit the turf or street by the triple underpass. Royce G. Skelton, who watched the motorcade from the railroad bridge, testified that after two shots 'the car came on down close to the triple underpass' and an additional shot 'hit the left front of the President's car on the cement.' Skelton thought that there had been a total of



DEATH SHOT by Jack Ruby in Dallas police headquarters seemed to wrap the case up, and Tague says he was a forgotten witness.

four shots, either the third or the fourth of which hit in the vicinity of the underpass. Dallas Patrolman J.W. Foster, who was also on the triple underpass, testified that a shot hit the turf near a manhole cover in the vicinity of the underpass. Examination of this area, however, disclosed no indication that a bullet struck at the locations indicated by either Skelton or Foster.



HOSTESS Eva Grant, Ruby's sister, ran his Vegas Club.

"At a different location in Dealey Plaza, the evidence indicated that a bullet fragment did hit the street. James T. Tague, who got out of his car to watch the motorcade from a position between Commerce and Main Sts., near the triple underpass, was hit on the cheek by an object during the shooting. Within a few minutes Tague reported this to Deputy Sheriff Eddy R. Walthers, who was examining the area to see if any bullets had struck the turf. Walthers immediately started to search where Tague had been standing and located a place on the south curb of Main St. where it appeared a bullet had hit the cement.

"According to Tague, 'There was a mark quite obviously that was a bullet, and it was very fresh.'

"In Tague's opinion, it was the second shot that caused the mark, since he thinks he heard the third shot after he was hit in the face. This incident appears to have been recorded in the contemporaneous report of Dallas Patrolman L.L. Hill, who radioed in around 12:40 p.m.: 'I have one guy that was possibly hit by a ricochet from the bullet off the concrete.'

"Scientific examination of the mark on the south curb of Main St. by FBI experts disclosed metal smears which 'were spectrographically determined to be essentially lead with a trace of antimony.' The mark on the curb could have originated from the lead core of a bullet but the absence of copper precluded 'the possibility that the mark on the curbing section was made by an un mutilated military full metal-jacketed bullet such as the bullet from Governor Connally's stretcher.'

The Commission pondered over which shot missed, but seems of the firm opinion that there were only three shots altogether.

It says: "Even if it were caused by a bullet fragment, the mark on the south curb of Main St. cannot be identified conclusively with any of the three shots fired. Under the circumstances it might have come from the

bullet which hit the President's head, or it might have been a product of the fragmentation of the missed shot upon hitting some other object in the area. Since he did not observe any of the shots striking the President, Tague's testimony that the second shot, rather than the third, caused the scratch on his cheek, does not assist in limiting the possibilities."

However, it was formally recognized that one bullet went wild: "Two bullets probably caused all the wounds suffered by President Kennedy and Governor Connally. Since the preponderance of the evidence indicated that three shots were fired the Commission concluded that one shot probably miss-



FATAL RIDE: President John F. Kennedy rides with Texas Governor John Connally (center, in front of JFK), and Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy (hidden behind Connally), in open car moments before he was shot.



DEATH OF PRESIDENT: President Kennedy slumps into the arms of his wife immediately after a sniper's bullet slammed into his head.

ed the Presidential limousine and its occupants . . ."

When I left the police station that day I tried to slip back into my normal routine. But it seemed impossible. I was selling cars. Nobody seemed interested in buying, and to tell the truth I didn't feel much like selling.

I was keyed up about the assassina-

tion, hanging onto each shred of news that was released.

Two days after the assassination, the Dallas News carried a picture showing the mark on the curb.

It had been taken by the newspaper's chief photographer, Tom Dillard, on November 23.

I was sure the police would be in touch with me.

But the feeling of bewilderment I saw everywhere was increased when later that day nightclub owner Jack Ruby killed Oswald in the basement of police headquarters.

Officers never contacted me.

I figured the reason for this must be that they had somehow managed to prove conclusively that all the shots came from the Depository and all were fired by Oswald.

Then in mid-December I saw some newspaper account summing up the whole story as it then appeared. It didn't satisfy me, it all appeared too pat, with the loose ends neatly tucked out of sight. It convinced me that no official notice had been taken of my own part — which, slight as it was, might be meaningful, I felt.

At the same time I read that the FBI would be one of the fact-finding agencies reporting to the special investigative committee which President Johnson had just created. So I

immediately contacted the FBI.

The agents who questioned me did not seem terribly interested in my story; they were going through the routine, that's all.

This strengthened my impression that as far as the investigators went, the arrest of Oswald and then his death had wrapped the whole thing up. I felt they did not see any point in looking further. They were satisfied there was nothing more to look for.

One of the agents asked pleasantly: "What else do you know?"

I shrugged. I said: "Well, I think I've given you the high points."

Then abruptly he asked if I knew Jack Ruby.

Later on, I wondered if this was a stock question, trotted out in every interview, because there was absolutely no reason for the interview to take this tack. Or possibly they simply figured that a bachelor my age

might frequent Ruby's clubs.

At any rate, I admitted I knew him.

His interest suddenly whetted, the agent asked: "What was the nature of your association?"

I told him it was nothing of any consequence. Twice in my life, I had visited Ruby's downtown strip joint, the Carousel.

Each time the stocky proprietor gave me the glad hand and scurried away. Once he pressed a ticket into my hand which entitled the bearer to free admittance to his suburban cabaret, the Vegas Club, operated by his sister, Eva Grant.

On a few occasions I had seen him and chatted briefly with him at the Vegas. These encounters were, on his part, strictly routine public relations things for a nightclub proprietor.

He had simply impressed me as a money-hungry huckster with a volatile disposition. The most sinister thing I had observed about him was that he seemed to anger easily.

But Jack Ruby was the one subject I could talk about that seemed to interest the agents. They wanted to drain it dry.

So I went on: "Well, this can't have any bearing on the investigation, but one of Ruby's strippers used to make frequent calls on my former roommate, an entertainer named Jody Daniel."

The agent came back: "It might!" and urged me to tell him the details. There was not much to add.

Daniel, a guitar-playing ringer for Elvis Presley and a television bit player, had lots of girls after him. This one, an exotic dancer known professionally as Tammi True, I had not met personally. She was featured at the Carousel.

The agents happily scribbled down all this trivia and thanked me for getting in touch with them.

At this point I tried to put the whole thing out of my mind and buckle down to my business of selling cars.

But every now and then I stopped by Dealey Plaza to see if the section of the curb with the teardrop-shaped indentation had been taken away yet. I knew it was evidence, valuable evidence, and I remembered much less momentous crimes in which evidence of this sort had been taken up for preservation or thorough analysis and even display in court.

I couldn't understand why it was still there, subject to time and all sorts of weather which day by day changed its appearance and dulled its possible usefulness.

I kept remembering how naturally interest had focused, the day of the assassination, on the park area and the railroad yard beyond it.

One day I tramped all around this area, examining the gazebo, a masonry wall and a wooden fence at one end. They were all places which could provide concealment for a sniper, it seemed to me.

At the same time I was impelled to do this, I felt foolish doing it. It

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hardly seemed possible anything of significance could be left unfound at the scene so long after.

Jack Ruby was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. The trial produced no bombshells, nothing suggesting he was part of an assassination conspiracy.

By July, 1964, numerous witnesses had testified before the Warren Commission. Just by chance, I read a newspaper article that talked about a "mystery victim" whose name was not given, and said the Commission would apparently wind up its work without being able to hear from him.

Some acquaintance of mine had tipped off the Associated Press about my experience, but without revealing my identity.

A Warren Commission investigator contacted AP, wanting to know my name. The wire service referred him to its source, who in turn told the "mystery victim's" name — James T. Tague.

As a result, I was directed to give testimony before an attorney for the Commission on July 23. The attorney was Wesley J. Liebeler, a talented interrogator with a charming and persuasive manner.

I know, too, that he was overburdened with work.

But I can't help feeling that the tenor of my testimony might have been different, except for what I think was the faulty system employed by the Commission.

What I mean is, this taking of testimony was not like a trial, where opposing lawyers make sure everything that may have a bearing on the matter is brought out.

Actually, I was just giving a statement to one man, Liebeler. And while I have no right to say what was in Liebeler's mind, it seemed to me that my experience was being tugged into shape to fit the already-accepted facts.

Somehow I felt constrained about putting forward anything that might disagree, making more work and more trouble. Never mind about the notion that it might lead to shedding more light on what happened.

My testimony before Liebeler is published on pages 552 to 558 of Volume VII of the Warren Commission hearings.

The published record illustrates what I am talking about. I think it



HEADQUARTERS CONFUSION after arrest of Oswald caused Dallas police to sidetrack Tague when he tried to report his story to them.



UNDERPASS: Tague stands at end of triple underpass where he abandoned his car.

shows clearly that Liebeler tried to color my thinking and lead me gently into conforming with the accepted story.

For instance:

LIEBELER: "Did you have any idea where these shots came from when you heard them ringing out?"

TAGUE: "Yes; I thought they were coming from the left."

LIEBELER: "Immediately to your left, or toward the back? Of course, now we have other evidence that would indicate that the shots did come from the Texas School Book Depository, but see if we can disregard that and determine just what you heard when the shots were fired in the first place."

And again, just a little while after that, there's a place where Liebeler put a question this way:

"Do you think that it is consistent with what you heard and saw that day, that the shots could have come from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository?"

I had to answer "Yes," to that one. It was "consistent," certainly; but it would also be consistent if one or more shots had come from somewhere else. Only of course he didn't ask that.

I'm a salesman, and I know a selling job when I see one. That's what the interview was. I did manage to get in a hint of my suspicions about the gazebo area of the park. I said: "... my first impression was that up by the, whatever you call the monument, or whatever it was — ... That somebody was throwing firecrackers up there, that the police were running up there to see what was going on, and this was my first impression."

Liebeler passed this off by suggesting that the panicky activity there (which actually came after the shots) was what drew my attention.

The record quotes him: "Your impression of where the shots came from was much the result of the activity near No. 7?"

I answered: "Not when I heard the shots."

But he went on immediately to other details, and even tried to suggest that I couldn't place the sound because it was echoing around.

According to the record, he said: "There was in fact a considerable echo in that area?"

I answered: "There was no echo where I stood. I was asked this question before and there was no echo."

He never opened the subject of whether the shots sounded different from each other. And I finished my session with him just trying to keep up with his fast-paced questions of a routine, non-controversial nature.

I should add, also, something that the printed volume of testimony does not make clear — that a preliminary

feature was a brief rehearsal of the highlights, with Liebeler suggesting the answers, like a warm-up to set the mood before a television performance.

On Aug. 5, 1964, the Commission finally got around to removing the section of curbing — eight and a half months after the assassin's bullet bounced off it.

The FBI's microscopic studies of

the break in the curbing might have meant something, if only they had been conducted before freezes, rain, heat and the erosion of time had changed the character of the vital evidence.

This slowness in getting on with the investigation is, in my view, nothing short of a tragedy. What tangles the tragedy up with farce in an altogether fantastic hodgepodge is that three months after the assassination — in February — the Secret Service investigated information from the Dallas Police Department that a bullet was reported to have bounced off some



STRIPPER Tammi True's dates with Tague's friend interested FBI more than his eye-witness story.

concrete near a sewer manhole cover. The Secret Service solemnly concluded there was nothing to the report, the concrete was undamaged.

But the agents had looked in the wrong spot! A photograph of the sewer manhole cover looked at by the Secret Service is shown in the Warren Commission report — and it is not the sewer cover near which I stood.

The FBI eventually also got around to taking some photo studies when the Warren Commission requested further information about the picture of the mark taken by Dallas News photographer Tom Dillard on November

23. Dillard had mentioned the photograph while talking to a member of the local U.S. attorney's staff in June, and shortly afterwards was asked to supply a copy of it for the Warren Commission.

So it was late July and early August 1964, before the FBI looked for the mark — a long, long time after the shooting!

One of the FBI photos shows the bullet-creased curb, another shows the temperature sign atop the Depository indicating 95 degrees — Texas in the summer.

I have only talked about the aspects of the case I was directly involved with, here.

But in the course of putting these notes together I had to do some reading in the Warren Report, and I couldn't help browsing.

What strikes me is that the gaps, holes, muddle-headedness and preconceived notions I ran into in my own little phase of the case seem to be showered all over the entire investigation of the shooting.

Several witnesses said they saw shots hit near the vicinity where I stood.

Yet for months the Commission was unwilling to question its first theory that all the shots fired by the assassin had hit within the Presidential car.

Many witnesses, including police and a Secret Service agent, believed someone was firing from the area of the gazebo. Their statements have been published but ignored.

On page 572 of Volume VII of the Warren Commission hearings, Abraham Zapruder, who filmed the tragedy with a movie camera while standing on an abutment near the gazebo, told Liebeler:

"... I also thought (the shooting) came from back of me."

He repeated this several times, but in the end Liebeler appeared to help him toward the notion that police running in that direction helped to form his memory of the sound coming from behind him.

Another item: I keep remembering a station wagon in the railyard, backed up against a fence adjacent to the park.

Several spectators saw it after the shooting, and wondered at the large number of overlapping footprints on the muddy ground by the tailgate — as if someone had waited there a long time.

Yet when officers went to see who owned it, perhaps to search the car, it was gone.

Were other obvious clues ignored until too late? This is an important question, one I often wonder about.

A reading of the Warren Report suggests that other things were brushed off and that conflicts in the testimony

were resolved in favor of the preconceived picture of events already held by the investigators and those in charge of hearing evidence.

The other wounded survivor of the Dealey Plaza shooting, Governor Connally, is reported to be satisfied with the one-sniper theory.

I am not.

— JAMES TAGUE

THE
Carousel
Club
RJ 7-2 3 6 2 ...
1312 1/2 Commerce Dallas Texas
your host... Jack Ruby
Continuous Shows!
Glamorous girls! girls! girls!
Open To--
2 am
nitely

NIGHTCLUB CARD handed out at Jack Ruby's Carousel cafe, where Tague admitted he had met Ruby briefly a few times.