

Mr. SLACK. No, sir; except the—

Mr. HUBERT. The FBI? Yes. I mean the President's Commission?

Mr. SLACK. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. The staff of the President's Commission?

Mr. SLACK. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. All right, sir; I think that is all. Thank you very much.

TESTIMONY OF DON FRANCIS STEELE

The testimony of Don Francis Steele was taken at 10:05 p.m., on March 25, 1964, in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Leon D. Hubert, Jr., assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. HUBERT. My name is Leon D. Hubert. I am a member of the advisory staff of the General Counsel on the President's Commission. Under the provisions of the Executive Order 11130, dated November 29, 1963, and joint resolution of Congress No. 137 and the rules of procedure adopted by the Commission in conformance with that Executive order in the joint resolution I have been authorized to take the sworn deposition from you, Mr. Steele. I now state that the general nature of the Commission's inquiry is to ascertain, evaluate, and report upon the facts relating to the assassination of President Kennedy and the subsequent violent death of Lee Harvey Oswald. In particular to you, Mr. Steele, the nature of our inquiry tonight is to determine the facts you know about the death of Oswald and any other pertinent facts you may know about the general inquiry. Mr. Steele, you have appeared here by virtue of a request made by the general counsel on the staff of the President's Commission, Mr. J. Lee Rankin, directed to Chief J. E. Curry. Under the rules adopted by the Commission, you are entitled to a 3-day written notice prior to the taking of this deposition, but the rules adopted by this Commission also provide that you may waive that 3-day notice if you are willing to do so. Now, the question is: Are you willing to waive the notice?

Sergeant STEELE. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Will you stand and raise your right hand and be sworn. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Sergeant STEELE. I do.

Mr. HUBERT. Will you please state your full name?

Sergeant STEELE. Don Francis Steele.

Mr. HUBERT. Your age?

Sergeant STEELE. Thirty-two.

Mr. HUBERT. Your residence?

Sergeant STEELE. 1707 Kent Drive, Arlington, Tex.

Mr. HUBERT. Your occupation?

Sergeant STEELE. Sergeant of police, Dallas, Tex.

Mr. HUBERT. How long have you been a sergeant of police?

Sergeant STEELE. Five years and four months—five months, excuse me.

Mr. HUBERT. What division or department of the Dallas Police Department?

Sergeant STEELE. I am presently in the patrol division.

Mr. HUBERT. Where were you on November 22, 23, and 24, 1963?

Sergeant STEELE. November 22 I was on a day off.

Mr. HUBERT. 23d?

Sergeant STEELE. 23d I worked in the Oak Cliff area.

Mr. HUBERT. And the—

Sergeant STEELE. And the 24th, of course, the regular assignment is in the Oak Cliff area, and I reported to that assignment.

Mr. HUBERT. Were you moved from that assignment?

Sergeant STEELE. I came to the city hall, came to the police station downtown

early that morning to pick up some correspondence, telegrams, and things like that, to take to Officer Tippit's widow.

Mr. HUBERT. And what time was that?

Sergeant STEELE. That was approximately 9:15.

Mr. HUBERT. What happened after that?

Sergeant STEELE. Well, the captain was bringing in some of the patrolmen from in the field, from all the stations, and I asked Lieutenant Pierce if there was anything he needed me to do before I left, and he said, "Well—" told me I'd better stick around for a while. He might need me.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you do anything later on?

Sergeant STEELE. Well, I stayed there and in the patrol office for 15 or 20 minutes, and then the captain came in—

Mr. HUBERT. Which captain?

Sergeant STEELE. Captain Talbert, C. E. Talbert. He told me to come on and go with him, and he wanted to look the situation over outside. We walked down the stairs to the first floor where the corporation court is located and out the door on the Commerce Street—and there were several—they blocked those buildings directly across the street from the police building. He told me to get a man, or get as many people as I needed and check the buildings over there to make sure that there weren't any doors open, or somebody wasn't concealed inside the building. I got a patrolman, I believe it was Officer Jez. We went over there, checked all the doors in the front. They were all secure. We climbed up the fire escape and checked the roofs of all of the buildings directly across from the vehicular exit on the Commerce Street.

Mr. HUBERT. When that was completed, what did you do?

Sergeant STEELE. Not much of anything for a while. Stayed down there in the basement for I guess 30 or 40 minutes and everything was kind of at a standstill.

Mr. HUBERT. What time was that?

Sergeant STEELE. About the time I finished checking the buildings, and everything, I guess it was—now, wait a minute. Excuse me. Then I reported—after I checked those buildings, I reported to Captain Talbert that there was a large crowd of pedestrians on the sidewalk right outside of the vehicular route, and he—told me to get some men, some reserve officers if I could, and move them across the street onto the south side of Commerce Street.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you do that?

Sergeant STEELE. Yes, I got five reserve officers and took them out there and told them what I wanted them to do. Helped them do it. Moved all the pedestrians across over to the south side of the street, and I stationed two of them at the corner of Harwood and Commerce, the northeast corner, with instructions to restrict any pedestrian traffic. In other words, not to allow them to come back to that vehicular exit, and I put two more down at Pearl and Commerce Street, and one at the door to city hall with the same instructions.

Mr. HUBERT. That is the Commerce—

Sergeant STEELE. The municipal building. The nearest door to the municipal building.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you place any on the Main Street door to the municipal building?

Sergeant STEELE. No, sir; I never got to the Main Street.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you place any officers to direct traffic at the intersection of Main and Pearl, or to control traffic?

Sergeant STEELE. Well, we started—can I go on?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes; surely.

Sergeant STEELE. Well, we'll get to that. After I got these reserve people put out, as I say, I got down—went down in the basement and talked to the captain for a few minutes. And I stood around and things were kind of at a standstill there. There was lots of television and camera people in there, and about 10:30, I guess, the captain told Sergeant Dean, who related to myself and Sergeant Putnam that they would bring this armored car in and the armored car was going to go down Main Street to the county jail, and he said to get all the regular patrol officers, all the regular officers and assign them to traffic intersections, traffic corners.

Mr. HUBERT. On what street?

Sergeant STEELE. On Main Street, and I just helped Sergeant Dean make the assignments. I don't recall whether I specifically assigned a man to Main and Pearl, but then the captain came along a few minutes later and said it had been changed, that we were going to run the armored car down Elm Street, so, whatever men we may have assigned to Main and Pearl, that is where he would have been, and he was taken off the assignment. They never went to it.

Mr. HUBERT. Okay. So, as far as you know there were no police officers of any sort, reserve or regular directing traffic or controlling it in any way on the corner of Main and Pearl?

Sergeant STEELE. To the best of my knowledge, there was no regular officer.

Mr. HUBERT. What about a reserve officer?

Sergeant STEELE. I couldn't say that.

Mr. HUBERT. In any case, the original plan to assign one to Pearl and Main, wasn't carried out because of the change in plans, and that man, whoever he was, went to Pearl and Elm?

Sergeant STEELE. Yes. I think that it was—let's see. I believe it was one of my men from Oak Cliff, but I'm not sure, but he never did get to it.

Mr. HUBERT. Yes.

Sergeant STEELE. We didn't even leave the basement.

Mr. HUBERT. Where were you when the shot was fired?

Sergeant STEELE. I was at the county jail.

Mr. HUBERT. I mean in the basement?

Sergeant STEELE. No; I had left.

Mr. HUBERT. Oh, you had left, so, you weren't in this building at all?

Sergeant STEELE. I left about 15 minutes before it occurred. See, we didn't have enough officers, enough radio patrolmen to fill all the corners to put a man at each intersection on Elm Street, so, I went to the county to contact the traffic people and see if I could get three men from them, that is how many we needed.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you know a man by the name of Ralph Paul that lives in Arlington?

Sergeant STEELE. No.

Mr. HUBERT. Are you familiar with a place called "The Bull Pen" there?

Sergeant STEELE. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. What is "The Bull Pen"?

Sergeant STEELE. It is a barbecue place, sell beer.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you know the manager of it?

Sergeant STEELE. No, no; I can't recall being in that place more than once or twice.

Mr. HUBERT. And the name Ralph Paul doesn't mean anything to you?

Sergeant STEELE. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you know Ruby?

Sergeant STEELE. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. How well do you know him?

Sergeant STEELE. Through contacts, various contacts when I was a patrolman.

Mr. HUBERT. How long had you known him?

Sergeant STEELE. Well, I had actually first met him, or heard of, or saw Jack Ruby, I guess, in 1955, about 8 years.

Mr. HUBERT. Would you recognize him by sight, do you think, if you saw him?

Sergeant STEELE. Yes; I feel like I would, although, it has been several years since I have seen him in person.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you have occasion to observe the number of people who were standing in the Main Street ramp part of the basement just at the entrance of the jail corridor? Do you know what I mean? In other words, as you were standing in the basement looking toward Main Street where the jail corridor intersects the ramp—

Sergeant STEELE. Right at the corner—

Mr. HUBERT. Right at the corner, and looking toward Main Street, did you have occasion to observe how many people were in that area just shortly before the shooting?

Sergeant STEELE. Well, 15 minutes would be as close as I could go, and at

that time only probably 10 or 12, kind of milling around. Reporters, television people walking back and forth and that sort of thing.

Mr. HUBERT. You left the building about 11?

Sergeant STEELE. Approximately 11; yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you know what kind of car Jack Ruby drives?

Sergeant STEELE. No. Years ago seems to me like he had a Buick, but that was years ago when I was a patrolman and it has been over 5 years. I think he had a Buick at that time.

Mr. HUBERT. Now, you have not been interviewed by me or any member of the Commission's staff prior to this deposition tonight, have you, sir?

Sergeant STEELE. No.

Mr. HUBERT. All right. Have you anything else you wish to add?

Sergeant STEELE. I guess I ought to mention this officer who was with me during all of this.

Mr. HUBERT. Who was that?

Sergeant STEELE. J. F. Harrison.

Mr. HUBERT. By the way, I meant to ask you, you have read those statements?

Sergeant STEELE. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. I'll mark the one dated November 25, 1963, addressed to Chief of Police Curry, apparently the original was signed by you, by placing on that document, "Dallas, Texas, March 25th, 1964. Exhibit 5098. Deposition of D. F. Steele," and mark my name below it, and I have marked another document which purports to be an interview by FBI Agents Robertson and Scott of you on December 3, 1963, by marking the first page, "Dallas, Texas, March 25th, 1964, Exhibit 5097, deposition of D. F. Steele." And I sign my name. On the second page of the document I have placed my initials on the bottom of the right-hand corner of the page. I would like to ask you if you have read those, and if those statements are correct?

Sergeant STEELE. I have read them. The only thing that I would say, in paragraph—this would be No. 6. Let's see. One, two, three, four, five, be paragraph No. 6.

Mr. HUBERT. Of Exhibit 50—

Sergeant STEELE. 5097.

Mr. HUBERT. Yes.

Sergeant STEELE. It mentions that I assisted Sergeant Dean in redistributing the newsmen and TV men in the basement area, but actually, I didn't do that.

Mr. HUBERT. Other than that correction, are those two exhibits correct, so far as you know?

Sergeant STEELE. Can I clarify one?

Mr. HUBERT. Oh, yes; certainly.

Sergeant STEELE. On page 2, of that same—

Mr. HUBERT. 5097?

Sergeant STEELE. Yes, sir; paragraph No. 7, says that I did not have knowledge of security measures in effect in the police building. I had knowledge that there was some type of pass required, but this was my first contact with it, and it was being handled by the other sergeant, so, consequently, I didn't know too much about what was required to enter the basement, but I knew that the men on the checkpoint did know what they were supposed to be checking for. And the next paragraph says I had not seen Ruby in approximately 2 years. I'd say probably more like 3 years when I was a jail sergeant.

Mr. HUBERT. Any other corrections or additions you wish to make?

Sergeant STEELE. No.

Mr. HUBERT. Now, so that the record may show that we are talking about the same document would you put your name below mine where it appears and your initials below mine where they appear on the second page. Your name there.

Sergeant STEELE. Just sign my name right here?

Mr. HUBERT. That's right; and just put your initials on the bottom.

Sergeant STEELE. Down here?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes; and then the other single documents just sign your name below mine. All right, sir. Thank you very much.