

Mr. WULF. Yes; I asked McBride specifically how come this boy was like this, mixed up and all, and he said he lived with his mother—this is hearsay, of course, through McBride—that his mother didn't associate with him too much and the boy was pretty much on his own and a loner as such.

Mr. LIEBELER. And this was a discussion that you had with McBride in 1955-56?

Mr. WULF. Right, 1955.

Mr. LIEBELER. Have you talked to McBride about this thing since the assassination?

Mr. WULF. No; I have not. I have only corresponded with McBride once, and that was about a month ago. I sent him an amateur radiogram requesting the address of a mutual friend in New York, but I got no answer, and we were wondering where he is.

Mr. LIEBELER. I can't think of any other questions at this point. If you can think of anything else that you know about that you would like to add or that you think would be helpful to the Commission, I would appreciate it if you would add it.

Mr. WULF. Not that I know of. The only thing I can—I don't know how many people have told you of this period of his life—I amplify that at this time Oswald was definitely Communist-minded, he was violently for communism, and this is what struck me as so odd for a boy so young at the time. I believe we were both 16, and he was quite violent for communism. His beliefs seemed to be warped but strong, and one thing that did hit me, he seemed—I told this to McBride at the time—he seemed to me a boy that was looking for something to belong to. I don't think anybody was looking for him to belong to them, and it may have been a problem, but he was definitely looking for something to associate himself with. He had very little self-identification, and at the time he hit me as somebody who was looking for identification, and he just happened, I guess, to latch on to this particular area to become identified with. That is about all I know of him at that time, and following that period, after he moved from New Orleans and went to Dallas, I knew nothing of him until I saw what I thought was him at the time, but I was not sure, the films that you showed me.

Mr. LIEBELER. I don't have any other questions at this point. I want to thank you very much for coming in and cooperating with us to the extent that you have. The Commission appreciates it very much.

Mr. WULF. That is quite all right. I am glad we could help.

TESTIMONY OF MRS. BENNIERITA SMITH

The testimony of Mrs. Bennierita Smith was taken on April 7-8, 1964, at the Old Civil Courts Building, Royal and Conti Streets, New Orleans, La., by Mr. Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mrs. Bennierita Smith, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

Mr. LIEBELER. Mrs. Smith, my name is Wesley J. Liebeler. I am a member of the legal staff of the President's Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy. Staff members have been authorized to take the testimony of witnesses by the Commission pursuant to the authority granted to the Commission by Executive Order No. 11130, dated November 29, 1963, and Joint Resolution of Congress No. 137.

I understand that Mr. Rankin wrote to you last week indicating that I would be in touch with you concerning your testimony.

Mrs. SMITH. Yes; he did.

Mr. LIEBELER. And that he enclosed with his letter a copy of the Executive order and of the resolution to which I have just referred, as well as a copy of the rules of procedure adopted by the Commission concerning the taking of

testimony of witnesses. Did you receive Mr. Rankin's letter and those documents?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes; I did.

Mr. LIEBELER. One of the areas of inquiry of the Commission relates to the background and possible motive of Lee Harvey Oswald, the alleged assassin of the President. We understand that you knew Lee Oswald at some point while he was living here in New Orleans. Before we get into the details of that, however, I would like to have you state your name for the record, if you will.

Mrs. SMITH. Bennierita Smith.

Mr. LIEBELER. You are married? Is that correct?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. What was your name before you were married?

Mrs. SMITH. Sparacio. My maiden name?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mrs. SMITH. Sparacio, S-p-a-r-a-c-i-o.

Mr. LIEBELER. Where do you live?

Mrs. SMITH. 3522 Delambert in Chalmette.

Mr. LIEBELER. Where and when were you born?

Mrs. SMITH. I was born in New Orleans the 20th of January 1940.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would you outline for us your educational background, please.

Mrs. SMITH. Starting from kindergarten?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mrs. SMITH. Well, I went to St. Dominic's. That is on Harrison Avenue in Lakeview. Then I went—it was either the third or fourth grade I transferred to Lakeview School, and then when I finished Lakeview School I went on to Beauregard, and from there to Warren Easton, and that is all the schooling I have had.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you graduate from Warren Easton High School?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. When did you graduate?

Mrs. SMITH. 1958.

Mr. LIEBELER. Am I correct in understanding that you attended Beauregard Junior High School at the same time that Lee Oswald did?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you know Lee Oswald at the time you both attended Beauregard Junior High School?

Mrs. SMITH. Well, I knew him from seeing him walk around school, and well, I guess I could remember him so much because he was always getting in fights with people, but as far as really knowing him well outside of school, you know, seeing him, I don't.

Mr. LIEBELER. Well, now you mentioned that he was always getting in fights?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Will you tell us what you know about that?

Mrs. SMITH. One fight really impressed me, I guess because there was this boy—he wasn't going to Beauregard, this boy he had the fight with, and he was a little guy. I think his name was Robin Riley. He hit Lee, and his tooth came through his lip.

Mr. LIEBELER. Through the upper part of his lip?

Mrs. SMITH. Oh, gee, I don't know whether it was a bottom——

Mr. LIEBELER. But it actually tore the lip?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes; it actually tore the lip, and I remember—what is that boy's name?—the blond fellow that was on television that knew him so well?

Mr. LIEBELER. Are you thinking of Edward Voebel?

Mrs. SMITH. That is him.

Mr. LIEBELER. V-o-e-b-e-l?

Mrs. SMITH. He took him back in school, and I guess they kind of patched his lip up, but he was—he more or less kept to himself, he didn't mix with the other kids in school other than Voebel. He is the only one I remember. And they had this little boy—I think it was Bobby Newman—he used to take around with, but I don't remember too much about him either. I can remember he was little, he was short.

Mr. LIEBELER. Who was?

Mrs. SMITH. Bobby Newman.

Mr. LIEBELER. Bobby Newman?

Mrs. SMITH. But he was, I guess, the studious type. Well, it seemed to me. He was always studying, you know, reading books, and that is as far as—I don't know what his grades were, but as far as him mixing with other people, he didn't. You know, like when you go to school, more or less everybody has their own group. Well, there wasn't anybody he hung around with, except, like I said, Edward Voebel.

Mr. LIEBELER. How well do you know Mr. Voebel?

Mrs. SMITH. Not well at all, I mean just from seeing him in school. I knew his parents had owned the Quality Florists on Canal Street. Well, I knew his sisters.

Mr. LIEBELER. You knew Voebel's sister?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes; he has got two, they are twins, Doris—and they call the other one Teddy. I don't know what her real name was.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever hear what this fight was all about, the one you described in which Oswald had his lip cut?

Mrs. SMITH. No; I really didn't. I just saw people standing around and knew there was a fight, and, you know, went over to see.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you get the impression that Oswald started the fight or that the other guy started the fight?

Mrs. SMITH. I really don't know. I didn't know what happened. Well, I know this boy was, I guess, a kind of a smart alec, this guy he had the fight with, this Robin Riley. Well, he was always hanging around school but he didn't go there, you know, he just—

Mr. LIEBELER. Was this Riley boy older, do you know, or about the same age as the rest of the students?

Mrs. SMITH. I think he was older, because he had a sister that went to Warren Easton with me and she was older, she was a grade ahead of me, and I am almost sure he was older than her.

Mr. LIEBELER. This fellow didn't go to Beauregard Junior High School?

Mrs. SMITH. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know if he went to school somewhere else?

Mrs. SMITH. No; I sure don't.

Mr. LIEBELER. Is that the only fight that you can recall in which Oswald was involved?

Mrs. SMITH. That is all.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you see the television program that was played over WDSU shortly after the assassination in which Voebel appeared?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes; I did see that. Larry Lala and Bob Jones had come to my house. Well, I knew Larry. He knew I went to Beauregard, and he called me up and asked me if I had remembered Lee Oswald, and when I thought about him, you know, things started coming back. It had been such a long time. And he asked me if they could come over, that they were writing this story on him, and I told him to come over if he wanted but I didn't think I could really help him, because it wasn't anything I knew about him.

Mr. LIEBELER. This person that called you was a newspaper reporter?

Mrs. SMITH. Well, he works for WWL. He takes the news films for them. And when he came in the house, I thought he would come with a pad and pencil, and he walks in with cameras and lights. He picked up one of my girl friends, he brought her over, and this other girl I went to school with, she was at my house, she had spent the day with me. It just so happened she was there. And then they just asked us questions, but I told Larry about that fight. Well, he had remembered the same incident.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you appear in the television program?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. You did?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir; the three of us.

Mr. LIEBELER. Three of you would be yourself—and what were the names of the other two girls?

Mrs. SMITH. Anna Alexander Langlois and Peggy Murphy Zimmerman.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now these two boys that you mentioned were classmates of yours at Beauregard Junior High School? Is that right?

Mrs. SMITH. Larry and Bob?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mrs. SMITH. No; Larry—I met Larry—gee, I don't even remember—I guess maybe at a school dance or something—and I went out with him, and he knew I went to Beauregard, you see. That is why he called me to see if I had remembered Lee, because I guess they were trying to get some—well, more or less a story together.

Mr. LIEBELER. What about the other boy?

Mrs. SMITH. Bob Jones?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mrs. SMITH. Well, he broadcasts the news.

Mr. LIEBELER. He works for the television station?

Mrs. SMITH. And he just came. Well, he asked us questions and then we just answered him, but I didn't know him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember what you told him at that time? You mentioned this fight to him?

Mrs. SMITH. I mentioned that, and then he just asked us how well we knew him, and we told him we didn't really know him as far as—like we would know him from seeing him walk through the halls at school or in class, but as far as knowing him outside of school, well, we didn't.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you know where he lived?

Mrs. SMITH. No; I didn't, not until, well, I read it in the paper.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did your other two girl friends remember any more details about Lee Oswald than you did?

Mrs. SMITH. No. Bob asked us how he dressed, and we told him, you know, that he always wore these sweater vests—they are more or less in style now, I guess, than they were when we were going to school—it was just like wearing your father's sweater or something, but, you know, maybe he was outstanding in that way. But that is all we told him. My girl friend told him about that, and—I am trying to remember.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember that Lee wore the sweater vests, or was that something that one of your girl friends remembered?

Mrs. SMITH. Well, she mentioned it, and then, well, we did remember him dressing that way.

Mr. LIEBELER. Which one of your girl friends was it mentioned this first?

Mrs. SMITH. I think it was Peggy.

Mr. LIEBELER. Peggy?

Mrs. SMITH. Peggy Zimmerman.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was there anything else that the three of you were able to recall about Lee Oswald, either at the time you were questioned by the television people or after that?

Mrs. SMITH. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was this the only fight, the one we talked about? Was this the only fight that any of you had ever remembered Lee Oswald being involved in?

Mrs. SMITH. That is the only one I remembered. Somebody had said he was in a fight with Johnny Neumeyer.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was that one of your girl friends who mentioned that?

Mrs. SMITH. I am not sure if it was them or if it was Anna's brother who told her.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember whether Lee Oswald dated any girls at the time he went to Beauregard?

Mrs. SMITH. Not that I know of, not in school.

Mr. LIEBELER. It was your impression that Lee Oswald didn't have any close associates or close friends while he was at Beauregard, with the possible exception of Mr. Voebel? Is that right?

Mrs. SMITH. That is right.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now aside from your recollection about Lee's wearing a sweater vest, can you remember anything else about the way he dressed?

Mrs. SMITH. He wore levis, I think.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was that different from what the other students wore?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes. Well, they more or less wore slacks, you know, pants or khakis.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was Lee ever criticized or given a hard time because of the way he dressed or the way he—

Mrs. SMITH. No; not that I remember.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember that Lee was ever bullied or pushed around by the other boys for any reason?

Mrs. SMITH. No; not that I remember.

Mr. LIEBELER. There isn't anything that stands out in your mind about Lee Oswald that really would set him apart from the other students, is there, or—

Mrs. SMITH. Well, I can just remember him walking, like down the hall in school, and he would just walk like he was proud, you know, just show his back and—but there isn't anything other than that fight. I think that is what made me remember him the most.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you know whether people thought that he was peculiar or arrogant because of this way in which he carried himself and the way in which he walked?

Mrs. SMITH. No. He never did mingle with anyone, you know. I guess they just more or less left him alone, unless if he ever started a fight with them or—

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever hear of Lee starting a fight with anybody?

Mrs. SMITH. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. You don't know how this fight—

Mrs. SMITH. I don't know how this fight started, I really don't. Like I say, I saw a group of people standing around, and when I went to see, they were fighting, but I really—

Mr. LIEBELER. Have you talked to Voebel at all about this?

Mrs. SMITH. No, sir; I haven't seen him—gee, I guess since I graduated from Beauregard.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now where is Beauregard Junior High School located?

Mrs. SMITH. On Canal Street, but I don't know the address. It is near the end of the streetcar line, near the cemeteries, across the street from St. Anthony's Church.

Mr. LIEBELER. Is it near the downtown section of Canal Street, or is it out farther?

Mrs. SMITH. No; well, it is further down.

Mr. LIEBELER. Approximately how far would it be from where we are now?

Mrs. SMITH. Oh, it is all the way down at the other end of Canal Street. I mean, you know how it is? The river is down here [indicating]. Well, it is on the other side of town.

Mr. LIEBELER. Quite a way from here?

Mrs. SMITH. Oh, yes, sir. I mean, you take the streetcar and you ride practically to the end of the line.

Mr. LIEBELER. Before you got to Beauregard?

Mrs. SMITH. It is about three blocks from the end of the line, the end of the streetcar line.

Mr. LIEBELER. So it would be several miles from here, would it not?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir; I guess—let's see—it must be about the 4000 or 6000 block, something like that, of Canal Street.

Mr. LIEBELER. In the 6000 block?

Mrs. SMITH. I think so. I am not sure.

Mr. LIEBELER. This is Beauregard we are talking about?

Mrs. SMITH. Beauregard; yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Can you tell me the area the people that went to Beauregard Junior High School came from? Was it just the area surrounding the school, or did they come from all parts of New Orleans, or just how did they decide who was to go to that high school?

Mrs. SMITH. Each high school has its own district, so that the people that lived in Lakeview went to Beauregard. If you lived in Gentilly, you couldn't go to Beauregard unless you got a permit from the school board.

Mr. LIEBELER. What kind of neighborhood was it? What kind of a district was it that Beaugard drew its students from back in 1954, and 1955?

Mrs. SMITH. Well, it's a nice neighborhood, it still is today.

Mr. LIEBELER. Has it changed much since then?

Mrs. SMITH. No; I don't think so.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would you say that it draws from an upper-middle class or middle-class neighborhood?

Mrs. SMITH. Middle-class neighborhood.

Mr. LIEBELER. You don't have any idea where Lee Oswald lived during the time that he went to Beaugard, do you?

Mrs. SMITH. No; sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you ever know that he lived in Exchange Alley?

Mrs. SMITH. No, sir; not until I seen it in the paper.

Mr. LIEBELER. Off the record a minute.

(Discussion off the record)

Mr. LIEBELER. You said that after you graduated from Beaugard Junior High School you went to Warren Easton High School? Is that correct?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now does Warren Easton High School also draw from a particular district, or is that operated on a different principle than Beaugard?

Mrs. SMITH. That draws from a district too.

Mr. LIEBELER. And that district included the district encompassed by Beaugard Junior High School?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes; and also, well, around Easton.

Mr. LIEBELER. It includes other districts aside from the Beaugard Junior High School District, does it not?

Mrs. SMITH. Well, all the kids that went to Beaugard automatically went to Easton, of course, unless they moved out of the district, but it drew kids that lived around Easton too. I mean the district widened, it got larger like from Beaugard to Easton, you know.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you know that Lee Oswald attended Warren Easton High School?

Mrs. SMITH. I can remember seeing him there. My girl friends didn't, but I remembered seeing him, you know, walking down the hall or walking outside of school.

Mr. LIEBELER. But nothing else?

Mrs. SMITH. But as far as recalling anything about him at Warren Easton other than that, I don't.

Mr. LIEBELER. There wasn't any event that he was involved in that stands out in your mind?

Mrs. SMITH. No, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember when you saw Lee Oswald at Warren Easton? Was it immediately after you started Warren Easton after graduating from Beaugard Junior High School?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes; it was right after we had started at Warren Easton.

Mr. LIEBELER. You yourself did graduate from Warren Easton, did you not?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. You actually attended Warren Easton for three years? Is that right?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes, sir; I did.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you remember seeing Lee Oswald over a long period of time at Warren Easton, or was it just for a part?

Mrs. SMITH. No; just—I may have just seen him once or twice at the beginning of the school year.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did Warren Easton students come from pretty much the same kind of family background or the same kind of economic and social background as the people who went to Beaugard Junior High School?

Mrs. SMITH. I think so, but there were a few kids—well, boys—that were—

Mr. LIEBELER. Of a somewhat rougher nature, shall we say?

Mrs. SMITH. Yes; I wouldn't want to say hoodlums, but they were, you know.

Mr. LIEBELER. There were people from a different class or different group of society?

Mrs. SMITH. There were rumors that some of them took dope. Of course, I don't know how true it is, but that is what they say.

Mr. LIEBELER. You never had any knowledge of anything like that or heard any rumors about that at Beauregard, did you?

Mrs. SMITH. No; I never have.

Mr. LIEBELER. If you can think of anything else about Lee Oswald that I haven't asked you about, we would appreciate it very much if you would set it forth on the record now. Can you think of anything else that we haven't covered?

Mrs. SMITH. There isn't anything else I can think of.

Mr. LIEBELER. I have no other questions at this point. I do want to thank you for coming down and cooperating with us to the extent that you have, and, on behalf of the Commission I want to thank you very much.

TESTIMONY OF FREDERICK S. O'SULLIVAN

The testimony of Frederick S. O'Sullivan was taken on April 7-8, 1964, at the Old Civil Courts Building, Royal and Conti Streets, New Orleans, La., by Mr. Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Frederick S. O'Sullivan, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

Mr. LIEBELER. My name is Wesley J. Liebeler. I am a member of the legal staff of the President's Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy. Staff members have been authorized to take the testimony of witnesses by the Commission pursuant to authority granted to the Commission by Executive Order No. 11130, dated November 29, 1963, and Joint Resolution of Congress No. 137.

I understand that Mr. Rankin wrote to you last week telling you that I would be in touch with you concerning the taking of your testimony, and that he enclosed with his letter a copy of the Executive order and the joint resolution just referred to, as well as a copy of the rules of procedure of the Commission relating to the taking of testimony of witnesses. Did you receive the letter?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. The documents I referred to were enclosed with it; were they not?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. One of the things the Commission is interested in is the background of Lee Harvey Oswald, the alleged assassin, to the extent that knowledge of his background can assist the Commission in evaluating Mr. Oswald's possible motive, if it is true, as it was alleged, that he was the assassin. Before we get into the knowledge that you may have of Oswald, would you state your full name for the record.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. Frederick Stephen Patrick O'Sullivan.

Mr. LIEBELER. What is your address, Mr. O'Sullivan?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. 413 Heritage Avenue, Gretna, La.

Mr. LIEBELER. You are a member of the New Orleans Police Department, as I understand. Is that correct?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. I am.

Mr. LIEBELER. You are a detective on the vice squad?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. Right.

Mr. LIEBELER. How long have you been with the New Orleans Police Department?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. Six years.

Mr. LIEBELER. You were born here in New Orleans? Is that correct?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. I was.

Mr. LIEBELER. And how old are you now?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN. Twenty-six.