

feet. The only problem was that he is off to the corner of the picture, and the image is tiny, unrecognizable in fact.

Nevertheless, through photographic enhancement techniques, the committee was able to obtain a blowup of the photo in which the umbrella man appeared clearly enough to be identified.

The committee released the picture to the press, asking anyone who recognized the umbrella man to contact the committee. The committee was contacted, and, as a result, the umbrella man was located by the committee.

It would be appropriate at this time, Mr. Chairman, to call Louie Steven Witt.

Will you please stand and raise your right and be sworn. Do you solemnly swear the testimony you will give before this committee will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. WITT. I do.

### TESTIMONY OF LOUIE STEVEN WITT

Chairman STOKES. Thank you. You may be seated.

The Chair recognizes counsel for the committee, Mr. Genzman.

Mr. GENZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Witt, would you state your full name for the record.

Mr. WITT. Louie Steven Witt.

Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Witt, I would like to direct your attention to November 22, 1963. Were you in Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1963?

Mr. WITT. Yes, I was.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did you witness the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir.

Mr. GENZMAN. Have you previously testified about the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mr. WITT. No.

Mr. GENZMAN. Have you ever given information to any law enforcement bodies concerning the assassination?

Mr. WITT. No.

Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Witt, what did you do on the morning of November 22, 1963?

Mr. WITT. I guess I went to work in the usual manner about 8 or 8:30.

Mr. GENZMAN. Where did you work at that time?

Mr. WITT. Rio Grande Insurance Co.

Mr. GENZMAN. What did you do at lunchtime on that day?

Mr. WITT. Well, I went out as I usually did every day when the weather was decent for a walk.

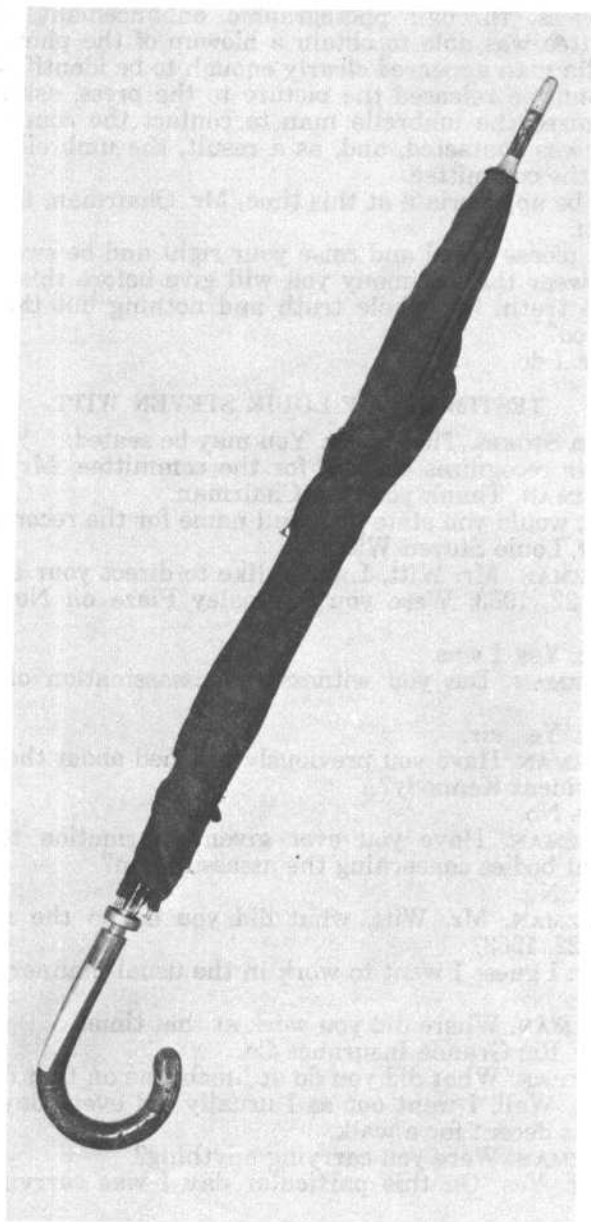
Mr. GENZMAN. Were you carrying anything?

Mr. WITT. Yes. On this particular day I was carrying a black umbrella.

Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Chairman, at this time I would ask that the exhibit marked as JFK F-405 be entered into the record.

Chairman STOKES. Without objection, it may be entered into the record.

[Whereupon, exhibit JFK F-405 was entered and photographs included for the record.]





Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Witt, can you identify Exhibit 405?

Mr. WITT. I would say that is the umbrella I was carrying.

Mr. GENZMAN. Why were you carrying an umbrella that day?

Mr. WITT. Actually, I was going to use this umbrella to heckle the President's motorcade.

Mr. GENZMAN. How had you gotten this idea?

Mr. WITT. In a coffee break conversation someone had mentioned that the umbrella was a sore spot with the Kennedy family. Being a conservative-type fellow, I sort of placed him in the liberal camp and I was just going to kind of do a little heckling.

Mr. GENZMAN. Are you saying you were going to use the umbrella as a symbol for the purpose of heckling?

Mr. WITT. I think that would cover it.

Mr. GENZMAN. On November 22, 1963, were you aware of the motorcade route?

Mr. WITT. No. Not really. I knew that they would be going down the center part of town somewhere noontime.

Mr. GENZMAN. What route did you follow during your walk?

Mr. WITT. Well, when I left the building which was located at the corner of Elm Street and Field Street, I went south on Field Street over to Main Street. This was where the crowds of people were, where the people were lining the sidewalks on either side.

Mr. GENZMAN. When you reached Main Street, in which direction did you head?

Mr. WITT. I traveled west. This would put me turning right from the direction that I came.

Mr. GENZMAN. West on Main Street?

Mr. WITT. Yes.

Mr. GENZMAN. Why did you continue in that direction?

Mr. WITT. Well, every day I walk someplace, and looking back the only reason I can account for my going that direction as

opposed to the other direction would be since I was carrying that stupid umbrella, intent on heckling the President, and not being a person who was given to—prior to this time—doing things that would bring myself into notice, the only thing I can say is that I went down the street where I assumed there would be fewer people, because the buildings on the west end of the street, or the lower end, were either low buildings or low buildings where there were not a lot of people.

Chairman STOKES. Would you be kind enough to pull that microphone closer to you. We are having difficulty hearing you.

Mr. GENZMAN. How far did you go on Main Street?

Mr. WITT. I walked all the way down Main Street to the courthouse records building area and on to Houston Street.

Mr. GENZMAN. Which way did you travel on Houston?

Mr. WITT. At this time I think I must have been planning to go back to the street that I worked on, Elm Street, which would be 1 block over. I traveled north over toward Elm Street.

Mr. GENZMAN. What did you do when you arrived at Elm Street?

Mr. WITT. Well, I ended up turning left and going down into what is known as Dealey Plaza. The only reason I can think that I ended up down there was possibly I looked down there and saw an area where there were not a large group of people. There were people in that area but there was also in this area which later became known as the grassy knoll, there was no one out in that area in any great number.

Mr. GENZMAN. What did you do when you reached the grassy knoll?

Mr. WITT. I think I went sort of maybe halfway up the grassy area, somewhere in that vicinity. I am pretty sure I sat down.

Mr. GENZMAN. Were you waiting for the motorcade?

Mr. WITT. Yes.

Mr. GENZMAN. Do you recall how long you waited?

Mr. WITT. I really couldn't say. I don't think I was there very long. Since I was not that all-fired determined to carry out what I set out to do, I am sure I didn't wait a great length of time.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did the motorcade come soon thereafter?

Mr. WITT. Yes, it apparently did.

Mr. GENZMAN. What did you do when you saw the motorcade coming into the area?

Mr. WITT. Well, as I recall, the motorcade had already made the turn and was coming down Elm Street going west on Elm before I became aware it was there, and it would have been from a straight-line position off to my left about like this [indicating] when I saw it.

Mr. GENZMAN. What did you do when you saw it approaching you?

Mr. WITT. I think I got up and started fiddling with that umbrella trying to get it open, and at the same time I was walking forward, walking toward the street.

Mr. GENZMAN. You testified that you were opening the umbrella to use it as a symbol hoping to catch the President's eye?

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir.

Mr. GENZMAN. Could you elaborate further as to the type of symbol you thought you were applying?

Mr. WITT. I just knew it was a sore spot with the Kennedys; I just knew the vague generalities of it. It had something to do with something that happened years ago with the senior Joe Kennedy when he was Ambassador to England.

Mr. GENZMAN. What happened next?

Mr. WITT. I beg your pardon?

Mr. GENZMAN. What happened next? I believe you testified that you were moving forward opening your umbrella as the motorcade was approaching you?

Mr. WITT. Yes. As I moved toward the street, still walking on the grass, I heard the shots that I eventually learned were shots. At the time somehow it didn't register as shots because they were so close together, and it was like hearing a string of firecrackers, or something like that. It didn't at that moment register on me as being shots.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did you react in any way?

Mr. WITT. No. I continued to move forward and finally got this umbrella up in the air. I think by the time I got the thing up in the air I was over and possibly standing on the retaining wall.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did President Kennedy see your umbrella?

Mr. WITT. I have no way of knowing. I really don't.

Mr. GENZMAN. What do you next recall happening?

Mr. WITT. Let me go back a minute. As I was moving forward I apparently had this umbrella in front of me for some few steps. Whereas other people I understand saw the President shot and his movements; I did not see this because of this thing in front of me. The next thing I saw after I saw the car coming down the street, down the hill to my left, the car was just about at a position like this [indicating] at this angle here.

At this time there was the car stopping, the screeching of tires, the jamming on of brakes, motorcycle patrolman right there beside one of the cars. One car ran upon the President's car and a man jumped off and jumped on the back. These were the scenes that unfolded as I reached the point to where I was seeing things.

Mr. GENZMAN. What did you hear at that time? Did you hear any voices?

Mr. WITT. I don't recall any voices at that particular time. After I finally became aware that something had happened, you know, something terrible had happened, I just sat down. I was standing on the retaining wall, and I just sat down, just right straight down, and apparently—I don't know if I had laid the umbrella down or dropped it or what I did. Nevertheless, I think it ended up on the sidewalk, and I just sat there.

Some of the things that I recall, one of the things I remember seeing while standing, there was a couple. I looked down to the right and there was a man and a woman, and they were covering some children, they were lying down and they were covering the children with their bodies and this may have caused me to sit down or I may have just sat down because I was stunned. Because there for a few minutes or for a few seconds at least I didn't seem to be able to collect my thoughts.

Sometime later after the cars moved out, this is when all this activity in the cars stopping and the cars moved out, I recall a man

sitting down to my right and he said something like: They done shot them folks.

He repeated it two or three times but it was repetitious of him saying the same thing.

Mr. GENZMAN. What was he saying?

Mr. WITT. They done shot them folks—something to this effect.

Mr. GENZMAN. Can you describe this man?

Mr. WITT. I remember him as being a Negro man. I don't know if I ever actually looked at him for any length of time or not.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did you hear any other voices?

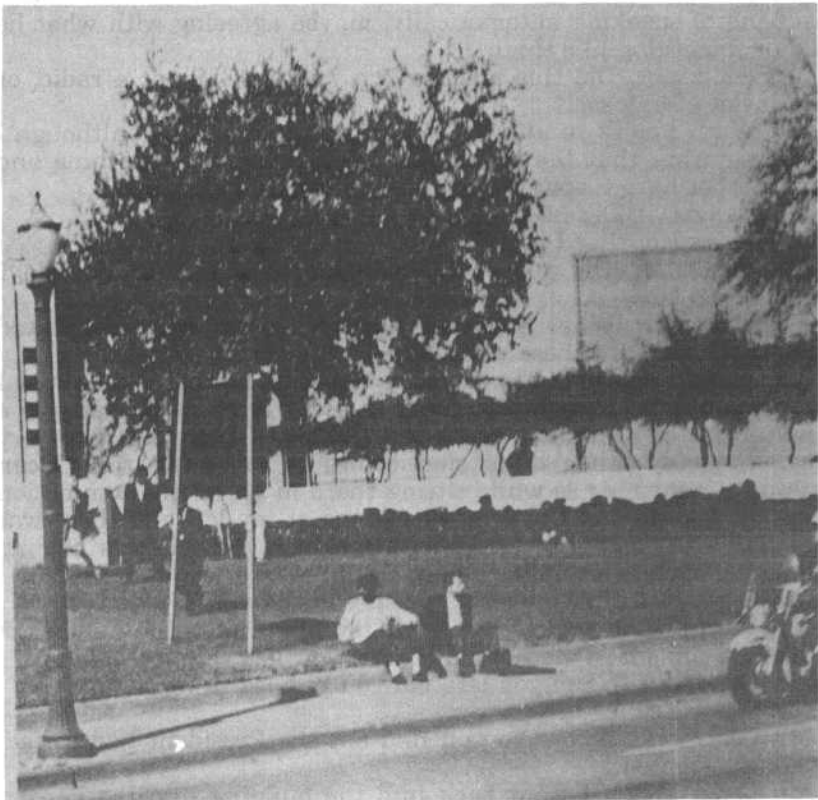
Mr. WITT. Well, there was sort of a pandemonium all around. The other thing that stands out in my mind, there was a woman or a girl, a female voice up behind me shrieking and crying, and she again repeated the same thing several times. She said something to the effect: They shot those people right before my eyes, or something like this. Anyway, there was repetition in what she said. She said it two or three times.

Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Witt, at this time please refer to JFK exhibits F-130 and F-404. JFK exhibit F-130, which is already on the easel, was previously entered into the record.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask at this time that JFK exhibit F-404 be entered into the record.

Chairman STOKES. Without objection, it may be entered into the record at this point.

[Whereupon, JFK exhibit F-404 was entered.]



JFK EXHIBIT F-404

Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Witt, can you identify the photographs on JFK exhibit F-130 on the left?

Mr. WITT. Can I identify them in what—

Mr. GENZMAN. Can you identify for instance the two pictures of the man in the top two photographs of that exhibit, with the arrows pointing?

Mr. WITT. Yes. That seems to be me.

Mr. GENZMAN. In the bottom left corner there is an item in red. Can you identify that?

Mr. WITT. That would be the umbrella.

Mr. GENZMAN. In the bottom right corner can you identify the person sitting?

Mr. WITT. I am sure that is me. I would have to say that is me.

Mr. GENZMAN. In the other exhibit, which is JFK F-404, can you identify either of those men sitting?

Mr. WITT. Yes. The one on the right is definitely me.

Mr. GENZMAN. Is the one on the left the man whom you were talking about earlier?

Mr. WITT. I really don't know. It could be or it might not be. I really don't know. I don't recall ever actually looking at this person. I don't know if I ever replied to what he said. I could have,

just kind of speaking automatically, maybe agreeing with what he said or something like this.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did this man have a walkie-talkie, or a radio, or any device of any sort?

Mr. WITT. I don't recall the person carrying anything, although I would say this, that they could have been carrying something and it would not have registered on me at this particular time.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did he act in any peculiar manner?

Mr. WITT. Not that I recall.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did you ever see him before or after that day?

Mr. WITT. No.

Mr. GENZMAN. What happened next, after you were seated and after you had heard these voices?

Mr. WITT. I continued to sit there for some period of time and I don't know how long I was there. I don't know if it was say a minute or 2 or 3 minutes or longer. I doubt if I stayed there very long. The only other thing that comes to my mind that I can definitely remember is while sitting there in all of this commotion going on around me, I just recall looking at my left and there was a policeman standing up there with a drawn gun. He was holding the barrel of the gun up in the air.

Mr. GENZMAN. How long did you stay in the area?

Mr. WITT. There again, I really do not know as to the number of minutes. I am sure I did not stay there very long.

Mr. GENZMAN. When you left, did you go back to work?

Mr. WITT. Yes.

Mr. GENZMAN. When did you find out the President had in fact been assassinated?

Mr. WITT. When I went back into the building into the department where I worked. Someone in there had a transistor radio. The first thing that was said when I walked in, "Did you hear about the President being shot?" I said something to the effect of I was down there in all that.

Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Witt, some assassination critics have alleged your actions with your umbrella were a signal to an assassin or to assassins to fire or a signal that the President had in fact been hit.

Were you signalling to anyone besides the President?

Mr. WITT. No; no one.

Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Chairman, I would ask the exhibit marked as JFK F-406 be entered into the record.

Chairman STOKES. Without objection, it may be entered into the record.

[The information follows:]



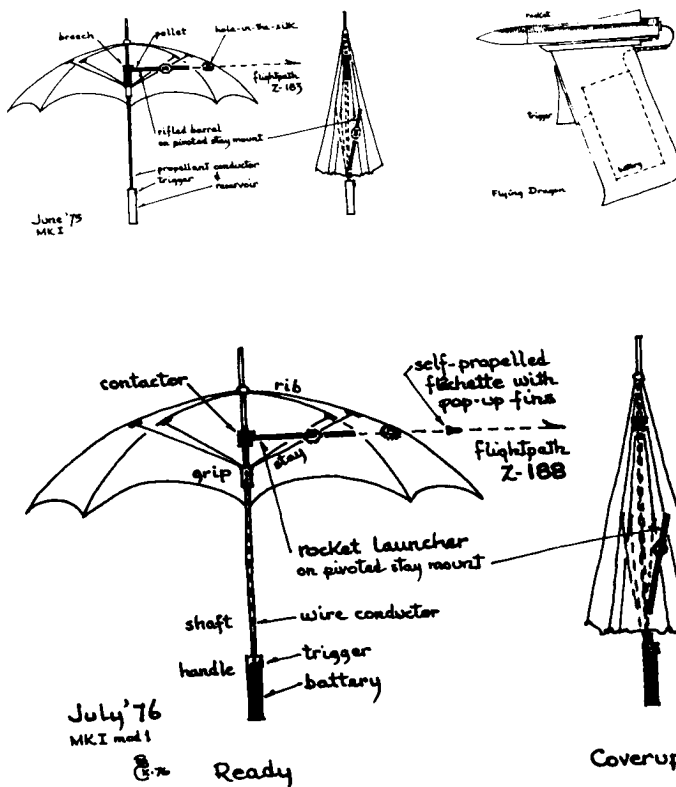


Figure  
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## THE PIECE

JFK EXHIBIT F-406

Mr. GENZMAN. I would like to correct that to exhibit 406.

Chairman STOKES. It may be so corrected.

Mr. GENZMAN. Mr. Witt, exhibit 406 is a copyrighted diagram drawn by assassinations critic Robert B. Cutler which shows two umbrellas with rocket and flechette attachments. Mr. Witt, do you know what a flechette is?

Mr. WITT. I do now. I did not prior to our interview yesterday evening.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did the umbrella in your possession on November 22, 1963, contain a flechette, or a rocket or a dart?

Mr. WITT. No, it did not.

Mr. GENZMAN. Has exhibit 405, the umbrella, ever contained a flechette, rocket, or dart?

Mr. WITT. No. Not since it's been in my possession.

Mr. GENZMAN. Did the umbrella in your possession on November 22, 1963, contain a gun or weapon of any sort?

Mr. WITT. No.

Mr. GENZMAN. Has exhibit 405 ever contained a gun or weapon of any sort?

Mr. WITT. This umbrella?

Mr. GENZMAN. Yes.

Mr. WITT. No.

Mr. GENZMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Witt.

Mr. Chairman, I have no further questions.

Chairman STOKES. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from the District of Columbia, Mr. Fauntroy, for whatever time he may consume.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Will you tell us where you lived November 22, 1963?

Mr. WITT. My home address?

Mr. FAUNTROY. Yes.

Mr. WITT. 7209 Embassy Street. I still live there.

Mr. FAUNTROY. And where did you work at that time?

Mr. WITT. I was working for the Rio Grande National Life Insurance Co. They were located at 51 Northview Street, at the corner of Elm and Beal.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Do you still work there?

Mr. WITT. No, sir; that company merged with a company in Kentucky in 1968, and that is when I left the insurance company.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Do you recall what kind of day it was on the 22nd in terms of its—the weather in the morning when you woke, when you got up at home?

Mr. WITT. I don't recall the early part of the day. I only know what the weather was around the noontime area.

Mr. FAUNTROY. I see.

Did you keep your umbrella at home or did you keep your umbrella at work?

Mr. WITT. I don't—the umbrella could have been either place. I tried to keep an umbrella in the car, or it would either be at work. Unfortunately it always seemed if I was in the car in the parking lot and it was raining the umbrella was at work. And I never seemed to have it at the right time. That morning I don't know if I took it from the car to work or if it was already at my place of employment.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Now, when you left—so you don't know whether you took the umbrella from home to work and thence to the motorcade, or whether the umbrella was at work. You don't recall that?

Mr. WITT. I don't recall; no, sir.

Mr. FAUNTROY. All right. Now, when you left—let's assume that it was at work. When you left for lunch, is it your testimony that it was your intent to utilize the umbrella to heckle the President?

Mr. WITT. Yes; that is true. That was the only reason I was carrying it.

Mr. FAUNTROY. So that you weren't just going for a walk at lunch?

Mr. WITT. Well, I did go out for a walk every day.

Mr. FAUNTROY. I see.

Mr. WITT. Every day that the weather was not extreme, either raining or excessively hot. This day I took the umbrella along and

going out, if it was handy for me to do my little act of heckling, then that was my plan, yes.

Mr. FAUNTROY. So it was your intent to use the umbrella if you happened to be on the route that the President was traveling during that day?

Mr. WITT. That is correct.

Mr. FAUNTROY. But you did not know exactly what that route was?

Mr. WITT. I knew in general because all of the parades and this type of thing usually went down Main Street.

Mr. FAUNTROY. I wonder if you would care to tell us a little more about your understanding of the significance of the umbrella, and why you felt that it would heckle the President to raise the umbrella?

Mr. WITT. I know the generalities of the thing. It had something to do with the—when the senior Mr. Kennedy was Ambassador to England, and the Prime Minister, some activity they had had in appeasing Hitler. The umbrella that the Prime Minister of England came back with got to be a symbol in some manner with the British people. By association, it got transferred to the Kennedy family, and, as I understood, it was a sore spot with the Kennedy family, like I said, in coffee break conversations someone had mentioned, I think it is one of the towns in Arizona, it is Tucson or Phoenix, that someone had been out at the airport or some place where some members of the Kennedy family came through and they were rather irritated by the fact that they were brandishing the umbrellas. This is how the idea sort of got stuck in my mind.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Is it true that what you felt was that Mr. Kennedy would be sensitive because of the appeasement image of the umbrella as related to his father?

Mr. WITT. Not the appeasement thing. It was just—excuse me—I just understood that it was sort of a sore spot with them and this was just one thing. I personally never thought too much of liberal politics in general. In this case the Kennedy family just happened to be in office.

Mr. FAUNTROY. I see. And it had no relationship in your own thinking between Mr. Kennedy's posture with; say, the Russians?

Mr. WITT. No. No. No. That was not it at all.

Mr. FAUNTROY. But someone had—no—you had read in the paper that someone had used an umbrella to heckle the President and that it was a sore spot, and that was the reason—

Mr. WITT. Not read in the papers.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Someone told you?

Mr. WITT. Yes. This was in a conversation somewhere at work. I wish that I could remember now who brought the subject up and put this idea in my head. I am sure that I would have taken that umbrella and clouted him over the head somewhere in this last 2 or 3 weeks.

Mr. FAUNTROY. OK. Now, Mr. Witt, I wonder if you would again show us what happened, what you did?

As I understand your testimony, you found your way into Dealey Plaza because there were not many people there, and you thought you would have an opportunity to in fact see the President and perhaps even heckle him.

Now, do you recall seeing the motorcade approach Dealey Plaza?  
 Mr. WITT. Yes. As a matter of fact, it was only—it was traveling west at the time I saw it.

Mr. FAUNTROY. All right. Now, where were you at that time?

Mr. WITT. I was sitting somewhere in the grassy area there in Dealey Plaza.

Mr. FAUNTROY. All right. May we suspend for just a moment?  
 [Discussion off the record.]

Mr. FAUNTROY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the brief interlude here.

Mr. Witt, I was—as we suspended momentarily, I was asking you to recall the turning of the motorcade, and the car in which President Kennedy sat, into Dealey Plaza. Can you recall that?

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir.

Mr. FAUNTROY. And you at that time, you were telling me, were sitting down probably on the grassy knoll?

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir; that is correct.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Now, describe to us what happened and what you did when the car turned into the Dealey Plaza?

Mr. WITT. Well, after I became aware of its presence, I got up and took the umbrella and started walking toward the street and opening the umbrella at the same time.

Mr. FAUNTROY. So that to the best of your recollection you—as you approached the sidewalk, you were opening the umbrella?

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir; that is correct.

Mr. FAUNTROY. All right. And the car is now passing and you—describe to us what happened.

Mr. WITT. Well, as I was moving forward opening this umbrella, it was somewhere at—excuse me—it was somewhere at this point that I heard the shots, and I continued to move forward and eventually brought the umbrella up over my head. I think by this time I had already—by the time I got the umbrella up over my head, I was at the retaining wall and standing on it.

Mr. FAUNTROY. All right. Now, the car is moving beyond you now. Are you aware that the President has been hit at this point—after you hear these firecracker-like shots?

Mr. WITT. No, sir. I—my view of the car during that length of time was blocked by the umbrella being open. And my—the next time I saw the car after I saw it coming down on my left traveling west, the next time I saw the car was when this activity of the car stopping, one car rushing up on another, the motorcycle patrolman stopping, there was this screeching of tires, this sort of thing.

One thing I recall there was a movement in the President's car. By this time—I don't recall seeing the President. He must have—I am sure he was down.

The only thing I recall was the—there was a sort of a pink movement, and it was—that was Jackie Kennedy, I think, wearing a pink dress or something. This pink thing stood out in my mind, and all of this happened in very rapid order. The—as soon as the one car ran up behind this one, a man jumped off and I think the first car was pulling out about the time he had jumped on the back.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Your testimony is that you then sat down where you are pictured there?

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir.

Mr. FAUNTROY. In the exhibit?

Mr. WITT. At this point I was aware that something terrible had happened.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Something terrible had happened?

Mr. WITT. Yes. At the time that I was moving forward with this umbrella in front of me, I was not aware of what was happening, even though I had heard the shots, until the movement, all this activity with the cars. That was my first awareness, and it was at this point that I just sat down.

Mr. FAUNTROY. And as you sat, you recall that—two things. One, that you recall seeing a couple covering their children, you say, off to the side?

Mr. WITT. Yes, off to my right.

Mr. FAUNTROY. And you recall the presence of someone sitting beside you, is that true?

Mr. WITT. That is correct.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Any someone from behind you saying something?

Mr. WITT. Yes. I don't know which of these came first, but the person sitting to my right said something to the effect that "They done shot them folks," something like that. I think it was repeated about two or three times. It was repetitious. I don't know if they meant to be talking to me, or if they were just talking out loud to themselves.

As I testified before, I don't think I ever actually looked directly at this person. I don't recall ever, say, just turning and taking a good look at the person.

I think what I was doing, I was—at this point I was somewhat stunned, and I just heard this while sitting there. At about this same time—I don't know if it was before I heard this or after—about this same time there was this female voice up behind me shrieking and saying, "They have shot those people. They shot those people."

I think she may have said "They shot those people before my eyes" or something like this. There were a number of people—I could hear crying in the background, this sort of thing.

Mr. FAUNTROY. So that your description of your emotions after sitting down would be that you were stunned. Is that true?

Mr. WITT. Yes. Once the realization—the realization that something—

Mr. FAUNTROY. Terrible had happened?

Mr. WITT. Had happened, yes, I was stunned.

Mr. FAUNTROY. I must admit that my reaction to the picture by which you were ultimately identified was one of a very cool cat. That is, you look rather cool there to me. But you were—

Mr. WITT. I can assure you I was not all that cool. I think one of my reactions was knowing that I was there with this stupid umbrella and heckling the President and—of course, I didn't know that the President had been killed. As a matter of fact, I didn't know he had been shot. I just knew that something had happened by the activity and what seemed to be in the air around me.

But I think my own thinking may have been at the time that—I would have to describe it as a—kind of like a bad joke that had

gone sour, or a practical joke you pulled on someone that had gone sour, since I was there with this thing, and for that purpose.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Mr. Witt, is it your testimony that at no time did the Dallas police or the FBI contact you about your presence at Dealey Court Plaza at this time?

Mr. WITT. No. In later years—after all this came up, I have always wondered why they didn't, but no one ever—so far as I know, no one ever made any attempt to find out who I was or why I was there.

Mr. FAUNTROY. When did you find out that you were a subject of suspicion; that is, that the umbrella man was somehow involved in the assassination?

Mr. WITT. When the committee sent these things to the newspapers, and it was printed in the local papers, in the Dallas paper there. As a matter of fact, I didn't see it on the day that it came out. We take the afternoon paper, the evening paper. I didn't see it on the day that it came out. I saw it later, after I had taken the newspapers to work, because I wrapped small parts in it for shipping, and it was at this point that I saw the thing and read the thing, and was then aware that someone was looking for me, so to speak.

Mr. FAUNTROY. So that—is it your testimony that you did not learn that somebody was concerned about the umbrella man until 10 or 15 years after, until 1978—only in 1978 were you aware?

Mr. WITT. Well, as far as I know, no one was concerned with me.

Mr. FAUNTROY. So that explains, therefore, why you did not yourself contact the FBI or the police—Dallas Police Department, because you did not—you were not aware that someone with an umbrella in Dealey Plaza was an object of interest?

Mr. WITT. No. As a matter of fact, I wasn't aware that I was an object of interest. As a matter of fact, I have found out since—within the last few weeks, that there have been countless numbers of books and all sorts of controversies over this thing. But I drifted along all of these years and I have never seen one of these books because I have never been a fan of this assassination thing. I don't go out of my way to read anything about it.

So it sort of all has gone over my head up until the last few weeks.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Now, is it your testimony that you did in fact see this picture in the papers in July of this year?

Mr. WITT. I saw this picture right here, the blurred picture in the lower right-hand corner.

Mr. FAUNTROY. And did you recognize it as yourself?

Mr. WITT. After I read it, yes.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Why didn't you come forward then?

Mr. WITT. Quite frankly I didn't at this point—I certainly didn't want anybody to know who I was.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Uh huh.

Mr. WITT. And I would say further that, had you never found me, I would have been far happier than I am right at this moment.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Mr. Chairman, I will suspend at this time in the event there are other members who have questions for the witness. I should like to reserve just a little time.

Chairman STOKES. The Chair will protect the gentleman's time.

Mr. Witness, the umbrella which lies before you on the witness table, did you bring it here today?

Mr. WITT. I brought it from Dallas and I turned it over to Mr. Genzman yesterday.

Chairman STOKES. And has that umbrella been in your possession from November 22, 1963, until today,

Mr. WITT. Yes; it has.

Chairman STOKES. It has never left your possession for any reason——

Mr. WITT. Well, I would have to——

Chairman STOKES. Other than here when you gave it to Mr. Genzman?

Mr. WITT. No. As a matter of fact, the day that I went back to work this umbrella was just tossed back on the rack where the raincoats and other umbrellas would have been. It could have been used by any number of people. There were quite a number of people who worked in this department, young boys who went out on errands, they could have taken this umbrella any number of times in or out.

Chairman STOKES. OK.

Now, I note that when Congressman Fauntroy was questioning you, it had been his intent to ask you to demonstrate the way in which you had held the umbrella on that specific date, but he was informed by counsel for the committee you had made a specific request that you not be asked to make such a demonstration; is that correct?

Mr. WITT. That is correct.

Chairman STOKES. OK.

And is that still your request to this committee?

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir. I—my line of thinking is that since we are not in the same area, we couldn't exactly duplicate what I did there. The only thing my doing that, it would just be more fodder for an overeager press back in Dallas to show this off and continue to embarrass me and my family, more so than we have already been embarrassed.

Chairman STOKES. Certainly.

Mr. WITT. We—I would add at this point that we have been through quite a bit. I brought it on myself, but nevertheless, we have been through quite a bit already.

Chairman STOKES. Well, I certainly understand that, and I am sure this committee is going to respect your wishes in that respect.

I have one concern though, and that is that if the committee does not cause the umbrella to be opened up, it may lend once again to more speculation that the reason we didn't open it was because there was such a dart gun in it. For that reason I am not going to ask you to do it, but I think that it is important that committee staff open this umbrella so we can ascertain there is no dart gun in it.

Mr. WITT. As far as I am concerned, they are certainly welcome to.

Chairman STOKES. All right.

Can we have someone from the staff do that? Miss Cynthia Cooper of the committee staff.

Maybe you ought to turn that way with it [indicating toward press and cameras]. [Laughter.]

[Photograph depicts what occurred when Miss Cynthia Cooper opened umbrella.]



Chairman STOKES. I guess there is no gun in it.

Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Devine.

Mr. DEVINE. Mr. Witt, we understand your reluctance to be here. We appreciate very much your coming forward. Just for the record, would you tell the committee what you did when you saw your picture in the paper? To whom did you report, or what did you do?

Mr. WITT. When I saw the picture?

Mr. DEVINE. Yes.

Mr. WITT. I didn't do anything at that time. I was working at the time I saw it and was aware that I was wanted for questioning by this committee. I didn't do anything. I didn't make any effort to contact this committee or anyone else. I just did nothing.

Mr. DEVINE. How did you become revealed publicly as the person with the umbrella?

Mr. WITT. As I understand it, one of my good friends went to the press. As a matter of fact, a couple of guys—reporters—came to where I work and started barraging me with questions, and I knew it was just a matter of time until they would have my name in the paper and then it would be known. For me it was just a matter of waiting until somebody came along and said, "I want to talk to you."

Mr. DEVINE. Getting back to the time and the place. I think in your original testimony in response to a question from counsel you said you heard a shot or something when you were sitting or standing there by the grassy knoll. Could you tell where this



disturbance or this shot came from in relation to where you were standing?

Mr. WITT. No, sir, really couldn't. Of course, there were a number of shots and they all seemed to be just rapid—just very close spaced. As to the direction, I couldn't say.

Mr. DEVINE. You do not know, you cannot recall from what direction they may have come?

Mr. WITT. No, sir. I am sorry, I can't be of any help there.

Mr. DEVINE. We recognize it has been 15 years nearly. Can you tell this committee how many shots you thought you heard?

Mr. WITT. I really couldn't say. Just remembering—I would have to say three or more.

Mr. DEVINE. Three or more. Were they in rapid succession?

Mr. WITT. Very. As I recall, very rapid.

Mr. DEVINE. Unless you have some objection, would you demonstrate by rapping your knuckle on the table about the time interval you feel you remember the shots were fired.

Mr. WITT. I don't know if I could really give you a good example, but it was just [witness wraps three times rapidly on table].

Mr. DEVINE. As I recall, when the President's motorcade was moving toward you, you were standing. Did you run the umbrella up and down as a symbol of Neville Chamberlain or did you just hold it up or did you point it in his direction? What did you do, specifically?

Mr. WITT. I really don't recall. I could have moved the umbrella up and down but I just don't recall.

Mr. DEVINE. Then when the disturbance occurred and the Presidential motorcade moved out, you sat down?

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir.

Mr. DEVINE. And there was someone beside you as indicated by that lower right-hand picture?

Mr. WITT. Yes. I still don't know if they were sitting there when I sat down or if they moved to that point later. I don't remember.

Mr. DEVINE. Did you say you saw people running then, after you were seated?

Mr. WITT. No; at one point the person that I mentioned before as running was a man who jumped off the second car and ran and jumped on the President's car.

Mr. DEVINE. I am talking primarily about spectators. Was there any movement among the spectators that you noticed?

Mr. WITT. Not as I recall spectators. There were people who seemed to run up from the street to that grassy knoll, but somewhere along the way I heard these were Secret Servicemen or plainclothesmen.

Mr. DEVINE. When you say running up the grassy knoll, you mean in the direction away from the President's car?

Mr. WITT. Away from the street, and it would be up to the side of that schoolbook depository building.

Mr. DEVINE. You mentioned you saw a police officer with a revolver, or a handgun, in a raised position?

Mr. WITT. This was after some time had elapsed.

Mr. DEVINE. Are you talking about seconds or minutes?

Mr. WITT. More in minutes. This was after I had sat down. As a matter of fact, it was somewhere about the point where I guess I was getting ready to leave.

Mr. DEVINE. After the motorcade moved out and the crowd was milling around you, you just casually went back to your place of employment?

Mr. WITT. I don't know if casually describes it. I did pick up the umbrella and go back to the building where I worked. One end of the building was on Elm Street.

Mr. DEVINE. That is the first time you learned the President had been shot?

Mr. WITT. After I got back in the building, yes.

Mr. DEVINE. That is all, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Ford.

Mr. FORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to be very brief.

Mr. Witt, in light of what Mr. Fauntroy and the chairman have mentioned to you earlier, I would like to know if for the last 15 years you have kept that umbrella at your home and your business place or some other place?

Mr. WITT. Yes.

Mr. FORD. You know, just looking at it, even though I know it flapped over when the young lady opened it up a minute ago, that umbrella is in pretty good shape, wouldn't you say?

Mr. WITT. I suppose.

Mr. FORD. Other than flipping on the wrong side. You can buy a new one and it will flip over. Why did you keep it 15 years? Did you have any reason for keeping that umbrella that long?

Mr. WITT. Not particularly. The only thing that the umbrella survived that long—like I say, this was in use because it was thrown in there with all the others—the only reason I can figure out it lasted this long is because of the size. You take this thing out and it's big and it's clumsy, whereas I had other umbrellas and would wear a raincoat and wouldn't use this one.

Mr. FORD. How many others do you have?

Mr. WITT. I have no idea. Over the years I have no idea.

Mr. FORD. Do you think you could have picked up the wrong one and brought it here from Dallas?

Mr. WITT. It is quite possible. The only reason I believe with almost 100 percent that is the very same umbrella is the fact that it's a big umbrella, and I am almost positive that is the one.

Mr. FORD. You said some of the other office people used the umbrella when you carried it to your job. Could they have walked out with your umbrella and brought this one back, a completely different umbrella from the one you used on the day John Kennedy was assassinated?

Mr. WITT. That is entirely possible, but I really don't think that happened.

Mr. FORD. In your house there are two, three, or four umbrellas; is that correct?

Mr. WITT. I wouldn't know how many are there. There are some in the back closet. I usually have one in the car. The other day I stumbled over one in the garage.

Mr. FORD. You did not identify that one 15 years ago and say, "I am going to keep this umbrella here"?"

Mr. WITT. No; at that particular time I placed no significance on that umbrella.

Mr. FORD. When this committee's staff made contact with you, did you go to your closet and identify "This is the one I had on November 23, 1963"? Were you able to say that to yourself?

Mr. WITT. Yes; when Mr. Moriarity was at my house there in Dallas he asked me if I still had the umbrella. I said, "Yes, I have an umbrella that I believe is the exact same umbrella."

Mr. FORD. You didn't have to look at the other umbrellas in your closet?

Mr. WITT. No; the other umbrellas I believe are little stubby things. Some of them may be folded up. Anyway, they are not big and clumsy like this thing.

Mr. FORD. So you buy a lot of umbrellas; is that correct?

Mr. WITT. No; not particularly. I am 53 years old. You collect a lot of stuff in that period of time. Umbrellas are not a particular hobby of mine. It is just that over the years—although God knows, it may seem it is.

Mr. FORD. My final question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Witt, what do you think an umbrella is used for? Is it used to keep the sun off you, the rain, or just to carry along with you to match a topcoat or something?

Mr. WITT. Well, an umbrella sure can be used for many things. I am sure you would use it to keep the rain off, keep the sun off, and in this case you can use it to—as I did for that purpose that I named.

Mr. FORD. Why are you using it today? Why did you come to Washington today with the umbrella? For what purpose?

Mr. WITT. Why did I?

Mr. FORD. Yes.

Mr. WITT. Because I was subpoenaed.

Mr. FORD. Thank you.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman STOKES. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Fithian.

Mr. FITHIAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, for the record, I would like to ask permission of the Chair to write a two-page historical memorandum on the tenure of Ambassador Kennedy in England and the Neville Chamberlain episode. I am afraid perhaps some might not get the clear significance of the umbrella as the symbol. Ambassador Kennedy took a rather merciless treatment subsequent to his placing his own belief in Neville Chamberlain's policies. These of course came in great disrepute after Winston Churchill became Prime Minister and after the Munich Conference broke down. I think it might be helpful if at this point in the record we had a somewhat clearer historical explanation than we have. I won't burden you with it now but I would like permission to write such.

Chairman STOKES. We would be happy to take advantage of the gentleman's expertise in the area of history and have it for the benefit of the committee's files.

Mr. FITHIAN. It is very hard 30 years hence to understand how much the symbol of Neville Chamberlain became associated with an umbrella.

Mr. WITT, in 1963, you said you were a conservative and you did not care much for liberal policies and you didn't care much for liberal politicians; is that correct?

Mr. WITT. Yes.

Mr. FITHIAN. Do you remember what groups or organizations you belonged to in 1963?

Mr. WITT. None.

Mr. FITHIAN. Not even any civic organizations or clubs?

Mr. WITT. At that time; no.

Mr. FITHIAN. Have you ever belonged to organizations such as the White Citizens Council or Ku Klux Klan?

Mr. WITT. No; I am just not a joiner of organizations in general. I am certainly not a joiner of organizations either to the left or the right.

Mr. FITHIAN. I just wanted to make sure. I think Mr. Devine questioned on the shots but you really at this date, even thinking about it all this time trying to reconstruct it, as I am sure you must have many times, you can't help the committee at all as to either the direction the shots came from or the number of shots fired?

Mr. WITT. No; I really can't. The only thing that I can recall is the rapid fire, their close spacing.

Mr. FITHIAN. I have no further questions.

Chairman STOKES. The time of the gentleman has expired. Is anyone else seeking recognition?

The gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. McKinney.

Mr. McKINNEY. Mr. Witt, it is a pleasure to see you in person. I know it is not a pleasure for you to be here and I really don't blame you, but I have been looking at that picture for so many years. It is a pleasure to see you in person.

You did hear gunfire, correct, and you saw several shots in rapid succession?

Mr. WITT. No, sir. I really can't place them at any particular place.

Mr. McKINNEY. You mentioned a policeman standing beside you on the grassy knoll with a gun, I guess sort of pointed up this way [indicating]. Did you notice anything more than normal activity of police or anyone running around looking for people or as if they were looking for people?

Mr. WITT. No. Not that I recall.

Mr. McKINNEY. I never disagree with my colleagues on this committee, particularly the member from the District of Columbia, since I am one of his most ardent supporters. But I think you have a rather stunned look on your face in the picture in the lower right-hand corner. You are just sort of staring across the street. You testified, you didn't even look at the guy next to you?

Mr. WITT. Yes. This is correct. One of the gentlemen up there described me as being very cool. I am afraid—

Mr. McKINNEY. I think your jaw is a little too low to look cool.

Mr. WITT. I was definitely stunned. This is why there are some things I don't remember. The things that I do remember are the

things where there was repetition, the multiple shots, this person repeating themselves, the woman repeating herself. Naturally the activity of the cars, that sticks with me. If I said anything to the person sitting to my right, I don't recall what it was.

Mr. MCKINNEY. One of the strange things about this assassination is that a few people were right about the picket fence or the retaining wall, and the committee has had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to find out what went on. They have made a lot of money out of a few words and we have spent a lot of money trying to figure out whether what they said is true or not.

Did you notice anyone or anything going on by the picket fence or by the retaining wall in Dealey Plaza up at the top of the grassy knoll? Did you see anyone peering over the fence or jumping over the fence or chasing anyone, or did you hear or see anything from that particular area?

Mr. WITT. No, sir, I did not, because at no point was I ever facing that direction.

Mr. MCKINNEY. Since that area was quite close to you in comparison to the book depository, do you feel in your own mind that if a shot had come from the grassy knoll picket fence retaining wall area, that you would have been aware of where that shot had come from? In general, you were not aware of where any of the shots came from but that area was quite close to you?

Mr. WITT. I don't know if I would have been aware of a shot that would have come from the area that you mention or not.

Mr. MCKINNEY. It is an unfair question because it asks for an assumption. I am not a lawyer, so I am allowed to get away with that sort of thing.

Did you notice the reaction or the movement, or anything else, of any of the other eyewitnesses across the street or around you?

Mr. WITT. No, sir, I did not.

Mr. MCKINNEY. In fact, you really didn't turn around to look at the guy who sat down next to you?

Mr. WITT. No, sir, I didn't.

Mr. MCKINNEY. You stated earlier that you did not look at the picket fence or at the retaining wall. So obviously if I ask you, did you observe anyone behind them, it is a slight redundancy. But did you observe anyone at any time wandering around that fence or wall before you opened the umbrella or before you left the grassy knoll?

Mr. WITT. No, I did not. The only time that I would have looked in that direction, if I even looked at all, would be when I was walking out into the middle of this grassy area. At no other time would I, because it would have been to either my back or my side. I really don't know how it is laid out down there. The picket fence, I don't even know where it is.

Mr. MCKINNEY. I really think this is very unfair for me to do this for you because I have trouble summarizing my own thoughts. But I would like to, if I could, summarize what I think you have said and, get you to agree with me or not. That is, you were sitting there waiting for the President to come by in an area where you were somewhat by yourself so that you could be noticed and so you could brandish the umbrella. As you opened the umbrella, your visibility of the scene was obstructed. When you held the umbrella

up, you became aware that something and something pretty bad, had happened. You had heard shots, you had seen a Secret Service man leap on the back of the other car, you had seen the pink blur of Mrs. Kennedy sort of scrambling on the back of the car. You closed the umbrella, sat down, dropped the umbrella on the sidewalk and realized that what had started out as a, quote, "joke," somehow or other had turned into something that hadn't worked, that was sour. Is that a pretty fair summary?

Mr. WITT. Yes; that is correct. I think that sums it up.

Mr. McKINNEY. Mr. Witt, I thank you very much for coming. I know you are an extremely private person and that this has been an extremely painful situation for both you and your family, and I for one, who feels quite often that my privacy and my family's privacy gets invaded for no good reason, sympathize with you and admire your willingness to answer questions that have been hanging around for 15 years.

Chairman STOKES. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Edgar.

Mr. EDGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I have been listening to Mr. McKinney's conversation with you about your recollection, I am reminded of the fact that my wife just a few weeks ago witnessed a very tragic accident and her first impression or expression was of shock when she saw the accident occur. But after the shock subsided she had the presence to go and say to the policeman who eventually arrived that she would be willing to act as a witness, give whatever testimony she could about who was or was not involved and exactly how the accident occurred for purposes of later investigations.

Did it ever occur to you, as someone who literally sat down in front of where the President was assassinated, that you might have a bit or piece of evidence that might be a contribution to the authorities looking into the death of President Kennedy?

Mr. WITT. I don't really know if this ever occurred to me or not. Had it occurred to me, I seriously doubt that I would have gone forward to volunteer any information.

Mr. EDGAR. Were you frightened about the fact that you had deliberately set out to cause a scene or an embarrassment to the President?

Mr. WITT. Not frightened as such, but at that time there was a great deal of what I would have to describe as hysteria in the Dallas area about the President being killed. It could have been extremely unwise for me to have volunteered and become known at that time. It could have been dangerous to me or my family.

Mr. EDGAR. In what way would it have been dangerous to you or your family?

Mr. WITT. Well, you would have had to have lived in the city to be aware of how things were then, in that everyone—I really wouldn't know how to describe it. I really don't know, but nevertheless I would say that I would not have made it known.

Mr. EDGAR. Were you afraid to go privately to the Dallas Police Department and share the information of what you saw with a police officer in the privacy of a room at the police station?

Mr. WITT. I really don't know. I really think if I had any real thought on this—and I can't recall one way or the other—it would

be my guess that my line of thinking was I really had nothing to offer other than just having done a foolish thing.

Mr. EDGAR. Were you concerned about the foolishness of your act or were you concerned about the retribution that might come to you?

Mr. WITT. I don't know what my line of thinking was. But I think it would have been both.

Mr. EDGAR. I appreciate the fact that you have come forward now in response to the picture that we have shown. It is difficult many years later to piece together all of what happened in Dealey Plaza. You do have a contribution to make, as has been exhibited by your presence here today. I hope that others who may see various events like this stop and think about making a contribution by notifying whatever authorities are there of what they see even if it isn't very important to them or if it looks insignificant to them. It may play a part in unraveling a very complicated story.

That is all, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Sawyer.

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to request that when the gentleman from Indiana submits his historical analysis of the attribution of the umbrella as a symbol of Neville Chamberlain and the senior Mr. Joseph Kennedy, who was then Ambassador to the Court of St. James, I be allowed to submit one page on the subject of Scotch.

Mr. FITHIAN. If the gentleman would yield, I meant to say for the benefit of the witness more than anyone else the sensitivity of the late Kennedy on this point stems not only because of the close family relationship but because he was secretary to his father the ambassador during a part of that tenure, and I think it was all the more kind of a personal thing, and he went on, of course, to write the award-winning thesis at Harvard entitled "While England Slept," and a lot of people believe that was again sort of his own trying to wrestle with this bad taste that was left in the mouth of the American people because of Ambassador Kennedy's interpretation of the German-British pact at Munich.

Mr. SAWYER. I have nothing further, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from the District of Columbia, Mr. Fauntroy.

Mr. FAUNTROY. I have one more question for Mr. Witt: You have indicated that you have learned over these years now that the umbrella man was considered a factor; that even someone has suggested the umbrella was a gun and that it may have been a signal. You may want also to know and, therefore, to help us, that the person sitting beside you has been alleged to have been a Cuban and that other pictures taken in the plaza suggested that he may have been talking on a two-way radio while he was sitting beside you. It would have been of great interest to us to identify who that person sitting beside you was. For that reason I simply ask, is there anything that you can recall about the person that would enable us to find him, even as we found you, because your story sounds plausible?

Mr. WITT. I wish that I could give you more information, but I am sorry I can't. Now, as for him talking on a——

Mr. FAUNTROY. Two-way radio.

Mr. WITT. Two-way radio, while sitting beside me, I feel sure that I would have been aware of that even though I was stunned and I don't recall ever looking directly at the man, but I believe that anyone who was sitting that close, as the picture shows him, I feel sure that I would have known if they were holding—because those walkie-talkie things are fairly large, they are certainly bigger than a person's hand. I feel like I would have remembered that. I can't say with 100 percent certainty that I would have remembered that, but somehow I just feel like I would have.

One thing—there are two things in having been shown these pictures where my memory was different from what the pictures showed. No. 1, the couple that was covering the children, I remember them as being up close to me, as being fairly close, because I saw them doing this, and in later years I have thought how ridiculous it was of me standing up with gunfire going on, and standing there like a tourist, and here these people had the presence of mind to cover these children.

The other thing is in my memory I don't remember a person sitting that close to me. The person that I remember as saying what he did and repeating it a number of times, I don't remember having been that close. I don't know if these pictures are taken at an angle that makes it look like that or if my memory is playing tricks on me.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Devine.

Mr. DEVINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just one question for the purpose of the record, Mr. Witt.

This appears to have been somewhat of an impulsive act on your part. Is there anything in your history that you have been a demonstrator or picket or engaged in symbolic acts in the past, or is this a single incident in your life that you wish had never happened?

Mr. WITT. Never before. This is the only time. True, I wish it had never happened. I am not a person who wishes to bring himself into notice, and I think this very fact is what put me down there in this area, in this street I went down. There were all those people. Had I broke out this big oversize umbrella, there would have been people standing on either side of me and probably questioning what the heck was I doing.

By continuing my little walk, I do not know how long I continued to maintain the idea I was going to do this, but I have the feeling when I was headed back in the direction of where I work, that I saw this area down there and an open space where there were not all this many people around. So I would think it would be my particular personality of not wanting to be questioned by people or putting on a show in front of people that led me into that particular location.

Mr. DEVINE. For the record, this is the first and probably the last time you have engaged in a demonstration such as this?

Mr. WITT. Indeed; the first and the last.

Mr. DEVINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. Mr. Witt, I would just like to say what is probably equally tragic with the event which occurred on that date



has been the rumors and theories which have grown up around such a tragic event in our history. Indeed, one of the reasons this particular committee was constituted by the House of Representatives is so that we might once and for all investigate all the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of President Kennedy and report to the American people the true facts as we have found them.

It is in that respect that even though this has been perhaps an unfortunate event for you, one that has caused you and your family some concern and indeed some embarrassment, I want to say that I think you have performed for the American people a real service today, by coming forth and dispelling another one of the rumors which have for now some 15 years caused great uneasiness in the American people.

Indeed, over the years many people have profited in continuing to form rumors around one of the most tragic events in our history.

Additionally, since it has been in a rather somber vein, you have been a very candid witness and one who has lent some degree of levity to our proceeding to give us some relief from this. I indeed applaud you for coming forth and giving us your testimony today.

Additionally I would extend to you 5 minutes for any comments you may wish to make, to which you are entitled under our rules.

Mr. WITT. I do not think I have any comment. I cannot really think of anything else that I could offer the committee which would be of any help to them. If I could, I certainly would. I would like to thank everyone for their courtesy. The only two people I have had direct dealings with was Mr. Moriarty who interviewed me in Dallas, and Mr. Genzman, who interviewed me last night. Both of these men have been very thorough, I would say, in their questioning, very businesslike, but at all times very courteous, and I do appreciate that.

The only other thing that I would care to say is that I think if the Guinness Book of World Records had a category for people who were at the wrong place at the wrong time, doing the wrong thing, I would be No. 1 in that position, without even a close runner-up.

Chairman STOKES. Thank you very much, Mr. Witt. You are excused now, sir.

The Chair recognizes Professor Blakey.

Mr. BLAKEY. A widely held belief that has been fostered by some of the critics is that the death rate of individuals connected in some way to the assassination has been improbably high.

The editor of a weekly newspaper in Midlothian, Tex., Penn Jones, started it all by publishing his mysterious death theory in a book, "Forgive My Grief", in 1966. Jones assembled details of the deaths and of the connections of the deceased to the assassination—an attorney for Jack Ruby, Oswald's landlady, newsmen who had covered the assassination, a noted columnist who had interviewed Ruby, and so on.

Other critics picked up on Jones' thesis. In *Accessories After the Fact*, Sylvia Meagher writes:

Viewed subjectively, the witnesses appear to be dying like flies. But an authoritative opinion on the mortality rate of those involved directly or marginally in the assassination and attendant events remains to be rendered by some actuarial