

TESTIMONY OF EDWARD C. DIETRICH

The testimony of Edward C. Dietrich was taken at 7:45 p.m., on July 13, 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. Sam Kelley, assistant attorney general of Texas, was present.

Mr. HUBERT. This is the deposition of Mr. Edward C. Dietrich. Mr. Dietrich, my name is Leon Hubert. I am a member of the advisory staff of the general counsel of the President's Commission.

Under the provisions of Executive Order 11130 dated November 29, 1963, and the joint resolution of Congress, No. 137, and the rules of procedure adopted by the President's Commission in conformance with that Executive order and the joint resolution, I have been authorized to take a sworn deposition from you, among others.

I state to you now that the general nature of the Commission's inquiry is to ascertain, evaluate, and report upon the facts relevant to the assassination of President Kennedy and the subsequent violent death of Lee Harvey Oswald.

In particular as to you, Mr. Dietrich, the nature of the inquiry today is to determine what facts you know about the death of Oswald and any other pertinent facts you may know about the general inquiry.

I understand, Mr. Dietrich, that you are appearing here tonight by virtue of a request made of you by letter by Mr. J. Lee Rankin, general counsel on the staff of the President's Commission, which you have stated to me that you received on July 9, 1964, is that right?

Mr. DIETRICH. On or about that date; yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. All right, will you stand and raise your hand, please?

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give us in this matter will be the truth, the whole, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. DIETRICH. I do, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. State your full name for the record, please.

Mr. DIETRICH. Edward C. Dietrich.

Mr. HUBERT. Where do you reside?

Mr. DIETRICH. 668 Harter Road, Dallas, Tex.

Mr. HUBERT. What is your employment?

Mr. DIETRICH. I am a guard with the Armored Motor Service.

Mr. HUBERT. How long have you been employed by them, sir?

Mr. DIETRICH. About 8 years, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. What is your position as a guard?

Mr. DIETRICH. We are referred to as an armored motor operator. Guard or driver. I don't think we have any official title.

Mr. HUBERT. You work under Mr. Bert Hall?

Mr. DIETRICH. Marvin Bert Hall; yes, sir. Bert being—

Mr. HUBERT. A nickname?

Mr. DIETRICH. Nickname; yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Were you on duty on Sunday, November 24?

Mr. DIETRICH. I was off duty up until about 10 o'clock when my mother received a call from Mr. Harold Fleming, who is one of our executives. He works out of the Fort Worth office, which is our main headquarters.

He called my mother asking if I were there, and she told him I had stepped out of the house for a few minutes.

I was dressed at the time, because we were going to dinner about 11:30.

Upon returning to my home about 10:30, my mother informed me of the telephone call. And since Mr. Fleming had left his number, I called him, and he advised me that he had something for me to do, that if I could, he would appreciate it if I would meet he and Mr. Hall at the Armored Motor Service terminal as soon as possible.

Mr. HUBERT. That is 1800 Leonard Avenue?

Mr. DIETRICH. Leonard Street.

Mr. HUBERT. Leonard Street?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes, sir. He asked me about how long it would take me to arrive at that destination. I told him I would be there in about 15 minutes.

He said, "Well, if it takes 30 minutes, it is all right."

I was in civilian clothes at the time. However, I carried my weapon with me. On arriving at the terminal, I saw Mr. Hall and Mr. Goin, and a few minutes upon arrival Mr. Fleming arrived on the scene.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you change into your uniform?

Mr. DIETRICH. No, sir. I had arrived in civilian clothes, and I had no other attire to put on since my uniform was at home.

Mr. HUBERT. Did Mr. Goin change or anyone else change into uniform?

Mr. DIETRICH. If I remember correctly, Mr. Goin was in uniform when I saw him. Mr. Hall, of course, was not, because he never wears a uniform, nor does Mr. Fleming.

Mr. HUBERT. Now you stated that you received this call from Mr.——

Mr. DIETRICH. Harold Fleming.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you also receive a call from Mr. Hall?

Mr. DIETRICH. I can't recall right offhand whether I did or not. Actually, I didn't receive any call myself. My mother, if I remember correctly, received—she might have received a call from Mr. Hall, as well as Mr. Fleming. I am not quite sure.

Mr. HUBERT. But in any case, you called Mr. Fleming at his home?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. You fixed that at 10:30. Are you sure that is correct?

Mr. DIETRICH. Sir?

Mr. HUBERT. You fixed the time of your calling Mr. Fleming at 10:30. I asked you to reexamine that and see if that is correct?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, if I remember correctly, my mother received a call from Mr. Fleming on or about 9:45. As to my calling him at 10:30, I can't truthfully say whether it was 10:30 or not. It was on or about that time.

Mr. HUBERT. What time had you left your home?

Mr. DIETRICH. I left home to visit the drugstore, to have a cup of coffee, I would say about 9:30.

Mr. HUBERT. How far is the drugstore from your home?

Mr. DIETRICH. Oh, about 2 miles.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you go by automobile?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. You had a cup of coffee?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. How long did you stay in the drugstore?

Mr. DIETRICH. Oh, I imagine I stayed there about 10 minutes; not too long.

Mr. HUBERT. What is the name of the drugstore, and where is it located?

Mr. DIETRICH. Let's see; well, I go to various drugstores on Sunday. I go to Skillern's sometimes, and Dobbs House.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you have any recollection of which one you went to on this particular Sunday?

Mr. DIETRICH. No, I just can't remember, because I don't go to the same one each Sunday. I really don't.

Mr. HUBERT. When you left there, you came right back home?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. How far, in point of driving time, was that drugstore?

Mr. DIETRICH. I would say about 5 minutes.

Mr. HUBERT. You mentioned the drugstore as being 2 miles away and taking 5 minutes. Does that help you in any way in fixing what drugstore it was?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, there are four different drugstores I visit off and on from Sunday to Sunday, and they are all approximately 2 miles, I would say.

Mr. HUBERT. So that either the distance, the way you mentioned on the time it takes to get there would not have——

Mr. DIETRICH. Would not have an effect on the time. I would say 5 minutes.

Mr. HUBERT. I think you were gone from your home about an hour?

Mr. DIETRICH. Sir?

Mr. HUBERT. Were you gone from your home about an hour?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I wasn't gone. If I remember correctly, I left at 9:30.

It took me 5 minutes to get to the drugstore. I spent, I guess, about 10 minutes in the drugstore. That is 15 minutes.

And 5 minutes back, was 20 minutes. I told you I arrived back at a quarter to 10, on or about a quarter to 10. It might have been 10 minutes till 10.

Mr. HUBERT. It was at that time that you received the message from your mother that Mr. Fleming had called and wanted you to call him?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. My recollection was, and correct me if I am wrong, that earlier you said you called Mr. Fleming at about 10:30. Now it appears you say that it might have been considerably earlier?

Mr. DIETRICH. I was thinking I had arrived at the terminal at 10:30. I think I called Mr. Fleming—well, I may have said that, but I really believe that I arrived at the terminal about 10:30. I called him on or about a quarter to 10.

Mr. HUBERT. Called at a quarter to 10?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes. To tell you the truth, I don't recall when I called him.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you leave right after you called?

Mr. DIETRICH. After I talked to Mr. Fleming?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes.

Mr. DIETRICH. I left, I imagine, in about 5 or 10 minutes. Let's see, it was about—oh, I brushed my hair and I had to get my revolver, or I cleaned it, just wiped it off.

I didn't want to get my clothes dirty, because it was a little on the greasy side.

I guess I left about 10 minutes after he called, or after I talked with him, rather.

Mr. HUBERT. How long did it take you to go from your home to the terminal?

Mr. DIETRICH. Oh, I would say about 20 minutes.

Mr. HUBERT. What route did you follow?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, I left my home on Harter Road, entered North Cliff, took a right on North Cliff on Buckner, Buckner to Loop 12, Loop 12 to Central Expressway, and then I made an exit to Ross, took a right on Ross to the terminal, which is about six blocks from Ross and Central Expressway.

Mr. HUBERT. You think you left your home about 10 or 15 minutes after?

Mr. DIETRICH. After I talked to Mr. Fleming.

Mr. HUBERT. So you would have left your home about 5 minutes after 10, or 10?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. So you arrived at the terminal at 10:20 or 10:25?

Mr. DIETRICH. Along about 10:30.

Mr. HUBERT. What happened to you when you got to the terminal?

Mr. DIETRICH. On arriving at the terminal, the first two people I met were Don Goin and Bert Hall. I referred to him as Bert Hall. His name is Marvin.

Mr. HUBERT. They were both there?

Mr. DIETRICH. They were in the parking area of the terminal.

Mr. HUBERT. How long after your arrival did Mr. Fleming arrive?

Mr. DIETRICH. Mr. Fleming arrived approximately 5 minutes after I did.

Mr. HUBERT. What did you do? What did the four of you do?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, at the time, the company officials weren't too sure as to what their plan was, as to what they were supposed to do.

I think Mr. Fleming used the outside phone. There is a phone on the outside of the building which remains locked. We had a key to it. He opened it and called, I think, Captain Batchelor, or someone by that name, and I walked away. I didn't overhear the conversation.

Mr. HUBERT. Who opened the door to the company building, to the terminal? Did you have a key yourself?

Mr. DIETRICH. I sure did. That is why I was called down there. Yes, I had the keys.

Mr. HUBERT. Not the keys to the truck, but the keys—

Mr. DIETRICH. No, the key to the terminal. Of course, I didn't enter the terminal until Mr. Fleming had talked with this captain. I think his name is Batchelor, or something like that.

Mr. HUBERT. He is with the police department?

Mr. DIETRICH. We think he is assistant to chief of police.

Mr. HUBERT. What happened after that?

Mr. DIETRICH. After Mr. Fleming talked to him?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes.

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, he received instructions from him. There was a question as to which truck was going to be used, and they decided they wanted to use the larger truck, which is No. 46. It is, I guess, one of the largest armored cars in the world.

And he also found out from the captain as to when they were supposed to arrive. And then there was a question —

Mr. HUBERT. Did you get any information as to when he was supposed to arrive?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I didn't, because I didn't want Mr. Fleming to think I was eavesdropping.

Mr. HUBERT. I mean; did he tell you what time?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; he didn't. I think he talked with Mr. Hall as to what time.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you hear?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I didn't hear that.

Mr. HUBERT. All right; go on.

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, after he talked with this captain at the police department, there was a question of whether we should take shotguns and as to how many shotguns we were to take, and so forth, and so on. And Mr. Fleming and Mr. Hall decided not to take shotguns, that revolvers would be enough. Mr. Fleming's contention was that actually we were only going to transport Oswald from the city jail to the county jail, and that it was up to the police to provide the necessary protection. All we were going to do was to provide the transportation.

Mr. HUBERT. So you had your sidearm, but you did not put the shotgun on the shoulder as usual?

Mr. DIETRICH. That's right; yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Was there any delay in getting away?

Mr. DIETRICH. None; other than the time consumed discussing whether we would take shotguns or not.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you remember any difficulty in starting the larger car due to battery difficulty?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes; we had difficulty starting it.

Mr. HUBERT. What kind of difficulty, and how long did it take to cure it?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, I think about 10 minutes to start the truck; yes.

Mr. HUBERT. How was it started?

Mr. DIETRICH. If I remember correctly, they backed another truck up to it, and I think they used a hotshot. They brought a cable out and connected up one battery to the other.

Mr. HUBERT. Who did that?

Mr. DIETRICH. I didn't participate in it because I was dressed up and I didn't feel like getting dirty. It was Mr. Hall and Don Goin were the ones participating in getting the truck started.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you ride from the terminal to the city jail?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes; with Don Goin. Don drove.

Mr. HUBERT. What truck were you in?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, that I can't remember. I asked Don Goin prior to my coming in here, actually, as to which truck it was. He can't remember and I can't either. I think it was 49. I am not sure.

Mr. HUBERT. But it was not the larger truck?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; Mr. Fleming and Mr. Hall were in 46, which is the larger truck.

Mr. HUBERT. When you say you can't remember which truck you rode in, you were talking about what number it had, but you do remember that you rode in the smaller of the two?

Mr. DIETRICH. The smaller of the two; yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Who was driving the smaller of the two?

Mr. DIETRICH. Don Goin.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you actually follow the larger truck; or did it follow you?

Mr. DIETRICH. We followed the large truck.

Mr. HUBERT. What route did you take from the terminal to the city jail?

Mr. DIETRICH. If I remember correctly, we entered Ross Avenue, took a left on

Harwood, drove up Harwood to Commerce, and took a left and proceeded about one-half block and parked on the left side of the street, I would say, about 5 feet beyond the ramp that goes into the basement of the city jail or city hall.

Mr. HUBERT. In other words, you passed the exit on Commerce Street from the city hall?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes, sir; we did. We had to.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you pass the larger truck and get in front of it; or did you wait until it backed in before you proceeded further?

Mr. DIETRICH. If I remember correctly; we passed the larger truck.

Mr. HUBERT. And got in front of it?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes; we got in front of it, and if I remember correctly, the larger truck had difficulty maneuvering into position in order to back into the—I started to say cellar—basement. Actually, it was too large to go into the basement.

Mr. HUBERT. Could you tell us how long it was between the time you first arrived at the terminal, considering the various things you have said happened, until you left starting off to go to the city jail?

Mr. DIETRICH. You mean from the time I arrived at the terminal?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes; until the time you left the terminal.

Mr. DIETRICH. How much time was consumed?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes.

Mr. DIETRICH. I would say 20 to 25 minutes.

Mr. HUBERT. Could you give us an estimate of how long it took to make the drive from the terminal to the jail?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, it was a Sunday morning. Traffic wasn't very heavy. We knew the route. We knew how to get there, and we knew the fastest route. I would say 6 or 7 minutes.

Mr. HUBERT. After you parked, as you say you did, about 5 feet beyond the Commerce Street entrance, and until you ultimately left, did you ever leave the immediate vicinity of the armored truck that you had gone in?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes, sir; I got out several times, if I remember correctly.

Mr. HUBERT. I mean, did you walk away from it?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; well, just a few feet, yes.

Mr. HUBERT. That is what I said, the immediate vicinity. You didn't go, say, 10 feet from it?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I don't think so. I think I walked to the rear of the truck, but not beyond it. One reason why I didn't was because I was in civilian clothes and I didn't want to be questioned by any of the officers in the vicinity as to why I was there.

Had I been in uniform, I would have perhaps walked around a little more. But I stayed in the cab of the truck.

Mr. HUBERT. When did it first come to your attention there had been a shooting in the basement? How did you learn that?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, I didn't know about it until after I had left the terminal.

Mr. HUBERT. Until after you left what?

Mr. DIETRICH. After we left the city hall and went back to the terminal and then started for home.

Mr. HUBERT. You didn't know there was a shooting?

Mr. DIETRICH. I didn't know there was a shooting. I remained in the cab most of the time, other than the few times I stepped out to look around and observe the crowd, et cetera. We were sitting in the cab of the truck, and Mr. Hall walked up and told us, he said, "It's all off. Its been called off." We didn't question him. He didn't elaborate in any way.

Mr. HUBERT. And you didn't find out that Oswald had been shot?

Mr. DIETRICH. Nor did I hear any shot fired.

Mr. HUBERT. You didn't know he had been shot until after you got back to the terminal?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, I didn't even know that anything had happened after we returned to the terminal, because if I remember correctly, Mr. Hall and Mr. Fleming, we never did see them upon returning to the terminal. And Don Goin and I parked the truck, got in our cars, and we had plans to meet at a coffee-shop on Ross Avenue and have a cup of coffee before we departed for our

respective homes. While we were in this cafe we heard the radio playing, or heard the announcer on the news, and one of the waitresses informed us that Jack Ruby had killed Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you know Jack Ruby?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I didn't.

Mr. HUBERT. You didn't notice any commotion around the jail prior to leaving?

Mr. DIETRICH. I heard a siren and perhaps it was the ambulance arriving to take Oswald from the city jail to Parkland Hospital, I think it was.

Mr. HUBERT. You left, however, before the big truck pulled out of the entrance?

Mr. DIETRICH. Yes; I heard some confusion, and I thought perhaps something had happened, I wasn't sure, but I didn't know really what had happened.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you remember seeing any police cars come up to the Commerce Street exit after the big truck had backed into that exit?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I don't remember any.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you remember a police car coming along and it backing in front of the big truck?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I don't.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you remember seeing a police car come and park in front of your car at any time?

Mr. DIETRICH. I think I faintly remember one, maybe, moving in front of us. As to how long he stayed there; I don't know. If I remember correctly; he didn't remain in front of us very long.

Mr. HUBERT. You don't remember seeing any police car back up so that its rear was almost touching the front of the big truck parked in the exit?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I don't, because there is no way that you can—we don't have a mirror in front—we can't see to our rear by looking in a mirror in the front like a conventional automobile. Our only means of vision would be our side mirrors, and I don't remember any police car backing back that was blocking the rear of the big truck.

Mr. HUBERT. Blocking the front?

Mr. DIETRICH. The front; I meant, because he backed in. May I smoke?

Mr. HUBERT. Surely; were you or Mr. Goin and Mr. Hall or Mr. Fleming wearing any kind of overcoat on that day?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I don't think so. It was a rather cool day and windy. An overcoat would have felt good.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you see any TV mobile unit vans parked on the same side of the street as you were, but closer to—

Mr. DIETRICH. They were right across the street; yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you see any parked on the same side of the street as you, but back of you toward Harwood?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, I couldn't swear to it. Could have been. Might have been. I don't remember.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you notice whether there were any people moving in and out of the Commerce Street exit where the large truck was parked during the time that you were there?

Mr. DIETRICH. I think I noticed a few policemen moving in and out; yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you see any people in civilian clothes moving in and out other than Mr. Fleming?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I didn't.

Mr. HUBERT. Were there police about the big truck?

Mr. DIETRICH. I didn't see too many policemen near the big truck; no, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you see any policemen on either side of the truck?

Mr. DIETRICH. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. As I understand from what you said, you had no opportunity to look down the Commerce Street ramp at all, did you?

Mr. DIETRICH. Well, about the only thing I was able to observe was when I left the truck a few minutes to walk a few feet to the rear of it.

Mr. HUBERT. But since you were 5 feet beyond the Commerce Street entrance, you only walked at the most 10 feet from it? You never did get at an angle so you could look down?

Mr. DIETRICH. No; I never did. I was rather reluctant to do that, because I didn't want to be questioned by the police since I wasn't in uniform.

Mr. HUBERT. Mr. Dietrich, I don't think that we have had any conversation or there has been any questions or answers between you and me other than what has been recorded this evening, is that correct?

Mr. DIETRICH. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. I mean, that is correct? You agree with it?

Mr. DIETRICH. That is correct; yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Thank you very much.

Mr. DIETRICH. I am sorry my memory was rather hazy.

Mr. HUBERT. That is all right. You did your best.

TESTIMONY OF EILEEN KAMINSKY

The testimony of Eileen Kaminsky was taken on July 23, 1964, at the U.S. courthouse, Chicago, Ill., by Mr. Burt W. Griffin, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Our normal procedure, Mrs. Kaminsky, is for me to say a few words at the beginning by way of introduction and then to administer the oath to you. Then, we will go on with the questioning at that point. Now, so that the record is clear, I will state again that my name is Burt Griffin and I am a member of the general counsel's staff of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy.

This Commission was set up pursuant to an Executive order of President Johnson which was issued in late November, and also pursuant to a joint resolution of Congress. The Commission has been directed to investigate and to evaluate and to report back to the President all the facts surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy and the death of Lee Harvey Oswald. Under this resolution and Executive order, the Commission has authority to take testimony and to designate various members of its staff for the purpose of taking that testimony, and I have been designated to take your testimony here today. Our particular reason for calling you, of course, is to obtain what information we can in particular about your brother, Jack Ruby, and about the death of Lee Oswald, although if you have any information you can provide us on any of the subjects that we are concerned with, concerning the death of President Kennedy, we also would like any of that information.

I might first ask you if you received a letter from the Commission asking you to appear here?

Mrs. KAMINSKY. Yes; I did.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you recall when you received that letter?

Mrs. KAMINSKY. Yes; Sunday—well, we picked it up at the post office. We weren't home.

Mr. GRIFFIN. The reason I mentioned it is that under the rules of the Commission, you are entitled to receive 3 days' notice before you appear for your testimony, and I take it from what you have said that that provision has been complied with. Do you have any questions before we start—before I start asking you questions?

Mrs. KAMINSKY. I don't.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Any questions about what the proceeding is about?

Mrs. KAMINSKY. Well, I don't know.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Well, if you have any as we go along, just feel free to ask me. Would you raise your right hand then and I will administer the oath to you. Do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mrs. KAMINSKY. I do.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Would you state for the record your full name?

Mrs. KAMINSKY. Mrs. Eileen Kaminsky, E-i-l-e-e-n K-a-m-i-n-s-k-y.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where do you live now, Mrs. Kaminsky?

Mrs. KAMINSKY. 6724 North Talman, T-a-l-m-a-n, Chicago 45, Ill.