

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you have any information that Jack Ruby may have been attempting to help Alton Sharp in Sharp's relationship with AGVA?

Mr. PALMER. I would assume; yes. He did try to do that. His feeling was that if he helped anyone, and as a matter of fact, he helped me, or he thought he had, on several occasions, in any relationship with AGVA, I am sure he felt that this was beneficial to his own dealings with AGVA. And when I say he helped me, he spoke laudatory of me in the presence of officials from New York. Anyway, that was it.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I don't believe I have any other questions then.

Mr. PALMER. Fine.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I want to thank you very much for taking your time to come here today. You have been very helpful to us today.

Mr. PALMER. Bye.

TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH WELDON JOHNSON, JR.

The testimony of Joseph Weldon Johnson, Jr. was taken at 5 p.m., on July 24, 1964, in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Burt W. Griffin, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Let me introduce myself again. I am Burt Griffin, and I am a member of the general counsel's staff of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy.

Before we ask anybody to testify, we give you a preliminary spiel on what this hearing is all about.

I will start out by telling you that the Commission was set up pursuant to an Executive order of President Johnson and the joint resolution of Congress, and we have been directed to investigate into and evaluate and report back to President Johnson on all the facts that we can find that bear upon the assassination of President Kennedy and the death of Lee Harvey Oswald.

We have asked you to come here today particularly because of your past employment with Jack Ruby's sister, Eva Grant.

Now I have been directed under the rules and regulations that have been promulgated by the Commission, to take your testimony, and under these rules and regulations, you are entitled to receive a 3-day written notice to come here to testify.

The first thing I will ask you is when did you receive a letter from us, if you did?

Mr. JOHNSON. When did I receive the letter?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Let's see. This date here, it is July 19.

Mr. GRIFFIN. So you received it in plenty of time, and we can go ahead and take your testimony. Do you have any questions that you want to ask me about this before we start?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, not especially, because I talked with the FBI several times before, and I told them everything I knew.

Mr. GRIFFIN. That is good. We want to now get it in the testimony formally. Let me ask you to raise your right hand and I will administer the oath to you.

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

Mr. JOHNSON. I do.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Would you give the reporter your full name, please?

Mr. JOHNSON. My name is Joseph Weldon Johnson, Jr.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How do you spell the middle name?

Mr. JOHNSON. W-e-l-d-o-n.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where do you live now?

Mr. JOHNSON. 12130 Willowdell Drive, Dallas.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When were you born?

Mr. JOHNSON. July 16, 1926.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What is your regular occupation?

Mr. JOHNSON. I am a musician; bandleader.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long have you been a bandleader?

Mr. JOHNSON. Since, well, I have been a professional bandleader since 1950.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you have occasion to work for Jack Ruby?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where did you work for him?

Mr. JOHNSON. Vegas Club.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When did you start working for him?

Mr. JOHNSON. I don't remember the exact month. I believe it was March 1956—1957, that is when it was.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you work continuously for him from that time on?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How many people were in your band?

Mr. JOHNSON. Five, including myself.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What kind of music did you provide?

Mr. JOHNSON. Variety of music. We have a very—well, I would say we played progressive jazz, rock and roll, and ballads.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now you eventually left Ruby's employment, didn't you?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When was that?

Mr. JOHNSON. Second of November of last year.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You say that date with a great deal of conviction. Is that a date you are sure of?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did you happen to leave Ruby?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I just wanted to change, just wanted to change places. I had been there so long, and a fellow came and talked to me about playing in another club, and I just decided I felt the change would be good for my group and myself.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you take your whole group with you?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were there any of the members of the band who stayed on with Ruby?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, the piano player, Leonard Wood, stayed.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did that happen?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, he felt that he could continue to stay there and keep the place going. I had a pretty good following there—but I understand it didn't work out too well.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What was Jack's reaction to your leaving the Vegas Club?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, actually, Jack hadn't been at the Vegas Club. He was downtown here, you know, and, well, he was kind of hurt. He didn't like it too well, but I had no contract at the club.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he feel that your band had been stolen from him?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I don't think so, because this was my decision.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he ever talk to you about his attitude toward your leaving?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What did he say to you that you recall?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, he wanted to know if I was leaving him for good, and if there would be a possibility, if anything else would come up in the future, would I be interested in coming back with him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What did you tell him?

Mr. JOHNSON. I told him if it would be to the benefit of my group, I would be glad to, but I had a family to support and further, I have to look out for things.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were you able to get more money at this new club?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes; more consideration also.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What was the name of the club?

Mr. JOHNSON. Castaway Club.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Are you playing there now?

Mr. JOHNSON. I am at Louann's now.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You said more consideration.

Mr. JOHNSON. I had a chance to use some of my ideas. They more or less had things fixed where I couldn't use my imagination, how I wanted to sell and so forth publicitywise, and I got better publicity and so forth.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How was it that you were restricted at the Vegas Club?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, more or less they won't do anything to make the club look decent, where I would invite people out that I felt were special guests, and I just felt like this other club was better equipped, but I wouldn't mind inviting anyone out there. And I had been at the Vegas Club, and he continued to say, "We are going to do this," and they never would get around to it.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What sort of things?

Mr. JOHNSON. I mean like fixing up the club and making it look decent. In fact, it looked the same way it did when I first moved there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How much of your dealings were with Jack Ruby, and how much of them were with his sister, Eva Grant?

Mr. JOHNSON. Let's see; I believe since 1959, all of my dealings were with his sister and not with him. Before then, it was all with him, because she wasn't in town. She came in from, I don't know, California, I believe.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, do you know that his sister was operated on in November?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did that operation take place while you were still working for her?

Mr. JOHNSON. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you see Jack Ruby get in any fights while you worked for him?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Can you tell us about some of those?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, it was just about some of the people that would come to the club that would get in trouble, and he just, you know, wouldn't hardly stand for that in his club.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you know George Senator?

Mr. JOHNSON. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you know Ralph Paul?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you know Tammi True?

Mr. JOHNSON. Not personally, but I mean I had worked on shows with them. They used to have shows at the Vegas Club, and she had worked some of the shows over there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Jack put on a striptease show at the Vegas Club?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How often would he have those shows?

Mr. JOHNSON. They used to have them every Friday night, but some time last year, maybe around August or something like that, something happened that they discontinued them.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When did he start having the striptease shows?

Mr. JOHNSON. I don't remember, but several years ago.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he have striptease shows at the Vegas Club before he opened the Carousel Club?

Mr. JOHNSON. I don't think so. I don't remember for sure.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you know another of his striptease dancers, Kathy Kay?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes; I have heard the name. It is familiar; yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you know a policeman named Harry Olsen?

Mr. JOHNSON. Not by name. I don't remember that name.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you know Ruby's dancer, Little Lynn?

Mr. JOHNSON. No; that name doesn't register.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you see Jack Ruby at all on November 22 or 23, the Friday that the President was shot, and the Saturday afterward?

Mr. JOHNSON. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you see any of his friends or employees over that weekend?

Mr. JOHNSON. Not that I recall; nobody that would be close to him, I would say. Maybe some of his friends, but offhand, I don't remember.

Mr. GRIFFIN. But not Ralph Paul or George Senator or Tammi True?

Mr. JOHNSON. No ; I don't remember seeing any of those.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Jack Ruby attempt to promote any records for you?

Mr. JOHNSON. He had talked about it. He never did promote any records for me. He talked about it, what he could do, but he never did.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Why did it never get beyond the talking stage?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, because he never did do anything about it. He just talked about it, and he said that was from some friends he knew over the country that he felt would do a favor for him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Jack have a master of ceremonies at the Vegas Club?

Mr. JOHNSON. You mean when we had shows, or nightly?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Nightly.

Mr. JOHNSON. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When he had shows?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he have shows every Saturday night?

Mr. JOHNSON. No ; the shows were Friday night.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he have them every Friday night?

Mr. JOHNSON. For a while ; yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he have a professional master of ceremonies, or did he do his own master of ceremonies?

Mr. JOHNSON. Occasionally he would, and sometimes he would have others.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were you ever aware of any restrictions that Jack put on as to the kind of jokes that the master of ceremonies could tell?

Mr. JOHNSON. You mean did he limit them?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes ; that you know of?

Mr. JOHNSON. I am sure—well, they never got, you know, where the average person wouldn't accept them, but sometimes they got a little rough, because they were all adults and I guess they felt they could go OK.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you find Jack Ruby an easy man or difficult man to work for?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, for the average person, I don't guess too many people could have worked for him, but I knew personally that Jack liked me and his sister liked me. But we would get into arguments, but it wouldn't last long, and they were very good to me, as far as that is concerned.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Jack show you kindnesses?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes ; he showed everyone kindness. As far as I am concerned, he was a very fine friend. He was a hot-tempered fellow.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What sort of kindnesses?

Mr. JOHNSON. Oh, if I ever needed any good word or something or someone he knew, he would never mind, he liked me, I know, personally. He liked me, but he was just, I say, high-tempered person. And you might run into him one time and he might be one way, and the next time he might be upset, but he would never leave until he would shake your hand if you had had an argument with him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You mean on a nightly basis if you had had an argument that night, you would still walk out having shaken hands on that? Is that what you mean?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Or did you mean that if you had an argument that resulted in termination of employment you would still shake hands with him and go away?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. That also?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. But he was the kind of fellow who quickly made up after he had an argument with you?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did he make up? Did he apologize for his own conduct?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes ; he would.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Can you think of any specific episode that you had with him?

Mr. JOHNSON. I had so many, I don't remember. For instance, maybe sometimes his sister would get angry with me, and it might be a night that I should be paid and she wouldn't pay me. Well, he wouldn't take sides with her. He would get the money from somewhere and pay me, even if he had to bring it

to my house, and he would apologize for her. Or even if anything should occur with him, he would apologize.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Is there anything else that you can think of that you would want to tell us that might shed some light on Jack Ruby on why he committed the crime that he committed.

Mr. JOHNSON. I haven't the slightest idea, because the only time that I have known Jack—I have known him to shoot in the club when there was some trouble—shoot at the ceiling. We would have heated arguments, but never at any time where he put a pistol on me. I wasn't afraid to argue with him, because I didn't think he was that kind of a person.

Mr. GRIFFIN. The time that he shot the pistol off in the club, what was he doing it for?

Mr. JOHNSON. They maybe were having a fight in the club, and to scare them he would shoot at the ceiling. I can't think of anything other than what I have told you. Other than, as far as I am concerned, he was all right.

After leaving, he wasn't angry with me, and he didn't appear to be angry with me. We had a heart-to-heart talk, and I just explained to him I thought it would be better for me. I was getting in a rut at the club, and I just wanted to change. We had no angry words or anything.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Thank you very much for coming here and waiting as you had to a bit longer than we expected.

Mr. JOHNSON. Like I say, even if it meant to give up a job, I wanted to do whatever I could.

Mr. GRIFFIN. This has been helpful to us because we are trying to get an insight from the experiences other people had with him, and you have helped us today to fill in some gaps that we didn't have, and I appreciate that very much.

Mr. JOHNSON. I certainly hope I have been some help. Thank you very much.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Bye, bye.

TESTIMONY OF EDWARD J. PULLMAN

The testimony of Edward J. Pullman was taken at 7:05 p.m., on July 24, 1964; in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Burt W. Griffin, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I am Burt Griffin, and a member of the general counsel's staff of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. We have a few preliminaries that we always go through to acquaint you with what we are trying to do here. I might state to you at the outset that the President's Commission was established pursuant to an Executive order by President Johnson and a joint resolution of Congress and under that set of official acts the Commission has been directed to investigate into and evaluate and report back to President Johnson all the facts relating to the assassination of President Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald. We have asked you to come here today in particular because you have been friendly over the years with Jack Ruby and we are hopeful that you can perhaps provide us with some information and insight into Jack Ruby that we wouldn't have had otherwise. Under the rules promulgated by the Commission, I have been directed specifically to take your deposition. I might tell you that the rules of the Commission provide that you are entitled to receive 3 days' written notice before being obliged to testify, and I now ask you at the outset if you received a letter from the Commission and when it was that you did receive it?

Mr. PULLMAN. I received the letter last Sunday.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Then, the 3 days' provision is complied with. There is another formal question that I will simply ask you and that is if you have any questions about the nature of what will take place in the next half hour or so?

Mr. PULLMAN. Well, I just wanted to get a little idea of what type of information you are looking for—just what you are concerned with?