Commission Exhibit No. 343



## TRAFFIC HELD UP BUS

# Oswald Planned to Ride by Scene

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Lee Harvey Oswald planned to ride a Dallas Transit bus past the scene of his infamous crime just 20 minutes after he murdered President John F. Kennedy.

But traffic was congested on streets around the Texas School Book Depository. He caught a bus seven blocks east of the building he used for his ambush—and rode it less than a block. Impatient with the delay, he scrambled to the Greyhound Bus Station and took a taxi.

"Take me to 500 North Beckley," he ordered.

For the past two days, we have retraced Oswald's escape route. We have pieced it together for the first time from actual interviews with the men and women whose testimony has been relayed to officials. Sometimes, as the careful reader will note, the information apparently was garbled in its transmission to reporters.

**A POLICE OFFICER** detained Oswald temporarily in the lunchroom of the School Book Depository building. But the detention was short. The building superintendent, R. S. Truly, identified Oswald as an employe, and the assassin was allowed to leave the building.

Less than 10 minutes after he had fired the fatal shots, the 24-year-old killer was walking into a crowd that was surging, unnoticed, toward him. He worked his way a few block north to Pacific Street, turned right, and hurried east on Pacific for six blocks.

**APPARENTLY,** he had found enough daring to rejoin the crowd.

He turned right one block and made his way back to Elm, near the old Blue Front Restaurant, where he tapped on the door of a Marvaire bus.

"It couldn't have been later than 12:40 p.m., said 40-year-old C. J. (Mac) McWatters, a cigar-smoking bus driver of 2023 Blyth Drive.

"I was driving down Elm and had reached Old Griffin. The run originated in Lakewood, and I was on schedule at the checkpoint on St. Paul Street—12:30 p.m. There weren't more than five or six passengers . . .

"Then this young man knocked on the door of the bus—there is no regular bus stop at Elm at Griffin—and I let him in.

"He took the third chair back, on the right . . .

**FROM THAT** seat, Oswald would have had a window view of crowds when the bus would turn at the foot of Elm Street, seven blocks further west, and turn at Houston Street.

Contrary to sketchy reports released by law enforcement sources earlier, Oswald said nothing about the assassination, the veteran bus driver said.

"By the time we had gone to the middle block of Poydras and Elm, traffic was held up. We were stalled there in the traffic. A man about 35, and dressed in working clothes, got out of his car in front of us and walked toward the bus. I knew I hadn't done anything to offend him.

Dallas Morning News Photo

Bill Whaley . . . "If you can call a nickel a tip, I guess he tipped me."

**THERE WAS** no reaction from Oswald when the working man told the driver "The President has been shot—there's a big traffic jam blocked . . ."

The bus driver said "A lady behind me had been jogging on a hard time — she wanted to catch a train at the depot. She wanted off so she could make it."

And Lee Harvey Oswald, also, wanted off.

"Give me a transfer," he said.

**THE TRANSFER** that he got was punched with McWatters' own mark. Each driver has a different kind of punchmark. FBI agents, about midnight, 10 hours later, would trace that transfer to McWatters' bus and learn the intriguing story of Oswald's few moments after the shooting.

The time is now approximately 12:40 to 12:45 p.m. Oswald barrels south across Elm to Lamar Street, then two blocks south to the Greyhound Bus Terminal on the corner of Lamar and Commerce.

**"CAN I TAKE** this cab?" he shouts to the driver, 36-year-old William Wayne "Chief" Whaley. Whaley — top man in seniority of the entire taxi system, a squat, hard-bitten military gunner and Navy Cross winner from Iwo Jima—told Oswald to get in.

"Take me to 500 North Beckley," the slender passenger said.

"I didn't notice anything particularly unusual," the driver declared. "I've hauled a lot of wives in my time."

Whaley whipped his cab around to the right on Jackson Street, drove one block to Austin and turned left to Wood. The cab went past the Dallas Hotel to Houston Street.

**MORE THAN** 30 minutes had elapsed since the assassination. Oswald still was only four blocks away from the scene of his crime.

The driver, a resident of Lancaster, tried to make conversation with Oswald.

"What the hell you think happened out there?" he recalled asking Oswald as an opener.

Oswald hadn't concerned himself.

"I just thought he would have a guy who wants to be left alone," Whaley said. "So I left him alone."

The cab went across the Houston Street viaduct and turned left on Beckley, not far across the bridge.

**WHEN THE CAB** made that turn, it was almost directly in front of the vacated house rooming house where Oswald rainwed for 10 weeks at 1026 North Beckley. The cab hurtled on for five more blocks and Oswald chugged. "This is too right here."

"I pulled over to the curb and he got out, didn't say anything else," Whaley said.

The fare was Mr Oswald owed: too generous. He handed Whaley a dollar bill and got out.

**DID HE LEAVE** a tip? Whaley was asked.

"Well, if you can call that nickel a tip. I guess he did," the burly cabbie replied.

Whaley's logbook shows that he had gone to the Greyhound Bus Station with a passenger. He had picked up at Methodist Hospital about 10 minutes before he picked up Oswald.

Why did he take a zigzag route to Oak Cliff?

"I miss two stoplights that way."

**THE LOGBOOK** shows he had 12 calls that day, 8 pickups—and 28 passengers in all. The notation that recalls the ride with the assassin is marked "12:30 to 12:45."

"That's . . . understandable," Whaley said. "I always mark 'em down in 15 minutes over-ugh."

The next we know of Oswald's whereabouts is only minutes later.

Mrs. Carline Roberts, housekeeper at the 10-room boarding house where Oswald had spent some of his eight-except-weekends in a 5x10-foot bedroom-cubicle, was watching television.

**"A FRIEND HAD** called and said the President had been shot," said Mrs. Roberts. "I said 'You're pulling my leg.' But I turned the set on, she was right.

"And then Mr. Lee (Oswald) came in, in an awful hurry. 'You're sure in a hurry,' I said, and he didn't say anything—just rushed through the living room to his room, then through the door . . ."

It was there that Oswald changed coats. He discarded the dark jacket that fitted the police description of the assassin and changed into a light tan jacket.

**HE MAY HAVE** grabbed a pistol, too. The taxi driver Whaley said he would have noticed a "bulge" if Oswald had been wearing a pistol in his cab.

Dallas Morning News Photo

C. J. McWatters . . . he didn't know Oswald was his passenger until the FBI traced a yellow transfer slip to him 12 hours after the President's death.

[illegible] had touched, that she saw no a pistol for her tenant. In Oswald's hand, the same H. H. LEE in pencil boldly.

This is the name he used when he moved in last Oct. 14—the day before he started work as a $44-a-week employe at the book depository. "I asked him for anti-skids in case something happened. He said, 'It's not important, large it.' So I large it . . .

**"NO, HE NEVER** was out much that I noticed. He was gone on weekends. Never got any mail that I recall—I put the mail out, all this junque in. Never made much noise. He never spoke any English on the telephone, some foreign language . . .

"His shirts look always over off at 7 in the morning.

"Yes, I did remember seeing a Russian filling station map of Dallas, all folded up, and I never disturbed anything that was his. Just dusted around it . . .

**THE MAP IS** among the evidence that officials say they have, with markings on it, to prove Oswald a premeditated assassination.

Mrs. Roberts noticed Oswald stared, momentarily as a bus stop on North Beckley after he left the house. She could see him there, through the front window, as she watched TV from the oval couch in the front room.

But Oswald didn't wait long. He hefted to his left and hurried south, on Beckley—the last time Mrs. Roberts saw him until he image appeared on the TV screen an hour later.

**SHORTLY BEFORE** 1 p.m., Oswald was walking in [illegible] Tenth and Patton Streets on East 9th—the corner of Beckley, and, with enough glimmer in a direct line and half-run because his own house and one 222 S. Zang apartment of the man who would later be his companion, Jack Ruby.

Twice witnesses say Oswald was confronted at that corner in the block by police officer J. D. Tippit.

Tippit was cruising alone in Car 10, in front of 404 E. 10th, when he signaled the killer to stop or halt.

**AS TIPPIT JUMPED** from his patrol car to check the man who fitted the all-points bulletin he had received just minutes before, Oswald fired three shots into the female police officer.

The three witnesses told police Oswald then officer-shopping his revolver toward the business portion of Oak Cliff. Others came up with other reports of a racing murder.

Oswald was reported in a dark hallway when that escaped a call, "washerwoman," given from a building at 401 E. Jefferson. About the same time, spectators at a service station further west up the street saw him run into a vacant lot, where police say the killer discarded his newly acquired jacket and three pistol shells.

**HE'S FOLLOWED** a short [illegible] Jefferson—"Brisby" Cadillac handling area.

About 1:45 p.m., John Pivoral, cashier at the Texas Theater at 231 W. Jefferson saw a hurrying stranger rush past her into the theater.

To this day, she can't recall whether he was a straight a [illegible] jacket.

"I was so upset listening to the radio about the President and all," she said.

**FIVE MINUTES** or [illegible] elapsed before James Hawkins, manager of a shoe store a few doors away, ran to Mrs. Pivoral and said he thought he had seen "somebody running from the police" duck into the theater.

The cashier immediately called police—who had just spelled an escape to a false alarm at the Dallas Library branch on Jefferson, further to the east. The police sirens wailed again.

Oddly enough, it was at the theater that McWatters—the bus driver who, unknowingly, had Oswald as a passenger earlier—had his second brush with fate. He has pulled up at the intersection on a course of 19 or 15 police cars zeroed in on the library.

**"I COULDN'T** imagine what was going on," McWatters said. "Little did I know!"

Police were in the Texas Theater to the startled, gawking owner of a movie called "War Is Hell." They found their man—hiding in a middle-section seat.

Three officers dragged him to a waiting unmarked car where two others had the motor gunning.

Fifteen minutes later, the assassin of President Kennedy was safe in a jail cell.

Safe for a few more hours.

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