

Smith of you, Rio Pierce, on December 2, 1963. Now, I ask you if you have had an opportunity to look at these documents?

Lieutenant PIERCE. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Are those documents correct and true?

Lieutenant PIERCE. To the best of my knowledge, they are.

Mr. HUBERT. Are there any omissions of a material nature?

Lieutenant PIERCE. I don't recall any.

Mr. HUBERT. Anything you would like to delete as not being the truth, or add because it has been omitted?

Lieutenant PIERCE. No; I don't see anything in there that I would care to change.

Mr. HUBERT. As far as you know, this represents the truth as you know it?

Lieutenant PIERCE. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Now, Maxey was in your car, was he not?

Lieutenant PIERCE. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Was he in the rear?

Lieutenant PIERCE. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Did he ever talk to you about having seen Daniels at the exit?
N. J. Daniels?

Lieutenant PIERCE. You mean since then?

Mr. HUBERT. Well, since the day you drove out of there. In other words, have you and Maxey ever, at all, conversed about whether he, Maxey, saw Daniels?

Lieutenant PIERCE. It is possible. I don't recall. People talk about a lot of things since then.

Mr. HUBERT. Now, there has been no interview between you and any member of the Commission's staff before this deposition today, has there?

Lieutenant PIERCE. No.

Mr. HUBERT. Anything else you want to say or add or change?

Lieutenant PIERCE. I don't know of a thing.

Mr. HUBERT. Thank you very much, sir.

TESTIMONY OF SGT. JAMES A. PUTNAM

The testimony of Sgt. James A. Putnam was taken at 10:05 p.m., on March 24, 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.

Mr. HUBERT. All right. This is the deposition of Sgt. James A. Putnam, Dallas Police Department. Sergeant Putnam, my name is Leon Hubert, Jr., I am a member of the advisory staff of the general counsel on the President's Commission. Under the provisions of the Executive Order 11130, dated November 29, 1963, by President of the United States, the joint resolution of Congress No. 137 and the rules of procedure adopted by the President's Commission in conformance with the Executive order and the joint resolution, I have been authorized to take a sworn deposition from you, Mr. Putnam. I state to you now that the general nature of the Commission's inquiry is to ascertain, evaluate, and report upon the facts relating to the assassination of President Kennedy and the subsequent violent death of Lee Harvey Oswald. In particular to you, Sergeant Putnam, the nature of this inquiry tonight is to determine what facts you know about the death of Oswald and any other pertinent facts you know, now, about the general inquiry.

Sergeant Putnam, you have appeared by virtue of a general request made to Chief Curry by the general counsel of the staff of the President's Commission, Mr. J. Lee Rankin. Under the rules adopted by the Commission you are entitled to a 3-day written notice prior to the taking of this deposition, but the rules also provide that a witness may waive the 3-day written notice. Now, I'll ask you if you are willing to waive that 3-day written notice?

Sergeant PUTNAM. What is the purpose?

Mr. HUBERT. Simply this, that any witness—the Commission says that any witness should have a privilege of having 3 days' written notice before he may be called upon to testify, and that in writing. Now, you have not had that, because of the way the request came. You see, the request came by letter to Mr. Curry from Mr. Rankin, who is the general counsel of the President's Commission, and—

Sergeant PUTNAM. May I ask why it was done by this method rather than the normal official notice?

Mr. HUBERT. Simply because of the number of people that were involved. If you wish to have the normal 3-day notice—

Sergeant PUTNAM. Well, will any further—will there be necessary for me to appear at any further date? Also, are we going to conclude it tonight? I will waive it for tonight and request if there is a further need for me to arrive at this time, that I receive it if—it has got my only day off in 2 weeks. I will waive it at this time and request it if you do need me again, but I do get the 3-day official notice.

Mr. HUBERT. We certainly will do so. First, let me say this in regard to the time and so forth and being your day off. The actual sequence of witnesses and the times they appear was not arranged by us. I don't want to place the blame on anyone but I am awfully sorry.

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's all right.

Mr. HUBERT. Let me say that if we want to call you in again, you will surely get the notice, but I don't believe you will be. However, I can't be absolutely certain. I will get in touch with you by phone and be sure that we don't disturb any of your rest days, because I know how important that is. Would you stand up and raise your right hand and take the oath. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I do.

Mr. HUBERT. All right. Please state your full name, please.

Sergeant PUTNAM. James A. Putnam.

Mr. HUBERT. And your age?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Thirty-seven.

Mr. HUBERT. And your residence?

Sergeant PUTNAM. 2015 Joan Drive.

Mr. HUBERT. Dallas?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Dallas, Tex.

Mr. HUBERT. What is your present occupation and how long have you held it?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Police officer. Ten years and four months.

Mr. HUBERT. And the rank you have now?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Sergeant.

Mr. HUBERT. How long have you been sergeant? You have held that for how long?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Eight months.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you have the same rank and responsibilities during the period of November 22 and 24?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Who do you serve under, sir?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Lieutenant Pierce.

Mr. HUBERT. And Lieutenant Pierce is with the patrol division?

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's right.

Mr. HUBERT. He is under Captain Talbert?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Now, then, Captain Talbert is your superior officer, too—

Sergeant PUTNAM. Also.

Mr. HUBERT. In the line of command. Now, I have in my hand, two documents which I am going to mark—three documents which I am going to mark. Marking the first one as follows, to wit: "Dallas, Texas, March 24, 1964, Exhibit 5071. Deposition of J. A. Putnam," and I am signing my name on that. The document is supposed to be a copy of a letter dated November 26, addressed by James A. Putnam to Chief of Police J. E. Curry, and it has two

pages. I am placing my initials on the second page. I am marking another document as follows, "Dallas, Texas, March 24th, 1964, Exhibit 5072. Deposition of J. A. Putnam." I am signing my name on that page, the exhibit being a single page exhibit. Then I am marking a four-page exhibit being a report of an interview of you made on December the 3, by Special Agents Carris and Peden of the FBI. I am marking the first page in the bottom right hand, "Dallas, Texas, March 24, 1964, Exhibit 5073. Deposition of J. A. Putnam." I am signing my name on the first page below that, and putting my initials in the lower right-hand corner of the three subsequent pages on that exhibit. Have you had a chance to read these three documents that I have marked?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I thought there were two. I would like to see the second one you marked. It may be another interview by the FBI. Now, is that correct?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes.

Sergeant PUTNAM. I wasn't aware that this was separate. I know I read the first one. Yes; I had missed that page. That was——

Mr. HUBERT. What I want to ask you about all three of them, as a group, if we can handle them that way, and if we can't——

Sergeant PUTNAM. I believe we can.

Mr. HUBERT. If they represent the truth, if there are any errors in any of those exhibits, if there are any omissions, do you wish to add anything, delete anything or modify anything?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir; I accept them as they are.

Mr. HUBERT. All right, would you do this, then. Would you put your name below my name where it appears and your initials below my initials that appear. Now, sergeant, I have only a very few questions, I think, to ask you about this, because as I read your statements they are rather complete, taking the three together. They just give about everything you know about the whole thing.

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. As I understand from this, you were in the basement area, from about 9:30 until shortly before 11:20?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. You assisted, I think, in the searches made of the basement area?

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's correct.

Mr. HUBERT. You made some of these searches yourself?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you know Jack Ruby?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, I—now, I——

Mr. HUBERT. Well, you know him now, of course. Did you on November 24, prior to the time that Oswald was shot, did you know of the existence of a person named Jack Ruby?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I had heard the name. But so far as ever meeting him personally, I don't think that I ever had. If I did, I don't remember it from seeing his pictures.

Mr. HUBERT. That is what I wanted to ask you, on the 24th, if you had met him and had formed a sufficient impression upon your mind so that you would have recognized him at all?

Mr. PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Of course, you did see his picture and perhaps you saw him after his arrest?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I saw his picture. I have not seen him personally.

Mr. HUBERT. You didn't see him in the basement area?

Mr. PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you know of anyone who did?

Sergeant PUTNAM. That saw him in the basement?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes.

Sergeant PUTNAM. Prior to the shooting?

Mr. HUBERT. Yes.

Mr. PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Have you been in any discussion with anybody as to who might have seen him and who might not have?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir. I—there have been discussions to the effect that if he were there, surely someone would have seen him and recognized him. I mean, just in informal discussions, how could he be there.

Mr. HUBERT. And yet, of course, he was there?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I understand that.

Mr. HUBERT. But, you know of no evidence that would indicate that anyone did actually see him?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. You have never heard anyone say that he had seen him?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Have you heard anyone say that they knew that someone had seen him there?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. In other words, the discussions have been simply that since he was there it is just amazing that he was not seen by anybody?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Except when I evaluate it. Having worked with those reporters and around them I can understand how that could have happened, because with as many a number of reporters that we dealt with for those 2 days, it's a tough job knowing everyone personally.

Mr. HUBERT. I think you were directed to get into a car with a couple of people and drive around to the Commerce Street side?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Who gave you that direction?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Sergeant Dean.

Mr. HUBERT. Now, when you drove out you were driving the car, weren't you?

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's—no, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Weren't you? Didn't you drive the car?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Who drove it?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Lieutenant Pierce.

Mr. HUBERT. Oh, I'm sorry. Did you see Lieutenant Pierce leave with the car?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I was in the car.

Mr. HUBERT. Where were you seated in the car?

Sergeant PUTNAM. In the front seat.

Mr. HUBERT. I'm sorry. The front right seat?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Who was in the back seat?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Sergeant Maxey.

Mr. HUBERT. When did you first get seated in the car?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Are you referring to time?

Mr. HUBERT. Let's get it this way, I understand that you had to get out of the car to move some of the people out of the way so that the car could go up the ramp.

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's correct.

Mr. HUBERT. So, you were seated in the car in the basement or parking area at first when you started off?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Actually on the ramp that comes from the parking area to the ramp that goes between the two streets.

Mr. HUBERT. Got in the car there?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Right.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you have to get out?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. When did you have to get out?

Sergeant PUTNAM. After he traveled about 10 to 15 feet.

Mr. HUBERT. Why did you have to get out?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Because the reporters had formed on the north.

Mr. HUBERT. Main Street?

Sergeant PUTNAM. On the north.

Mr. HUBERT. Why don't you just use the street directions. Main Street ramp?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Main Street ramp, but by the "ramp" I don't mean the incline, where it flattens out.

Mr. HUBERT. I understand. On that flat part.

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's right. So, I had to get out of the car and move them back to prevent hitting some of them.

Mr. HUBERT. How many people were in that area do you think?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I would estimate 15 to 25.

Mr. HUBERT. And they were standing shoulder to shoulder?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I didn't get—this impression. They were standing in wait of the expected departure of Oswald, and they were just mingled, and you know how reporters act and operate in trying to position themselves.

Mr. HUBERT. It wasn't enough that you were able to blow the horn, you had to get out?

Sergeant PUTNAM. We didn't even attempt to blow the horn to cause confusion. First of all, this is the entrance and not the exit. They are not expecting a vehicle coming out of there, they are not paying attention to us. They are looking in the direction they expect Oswald to come out from, so, I got out and—

Mr. HUBERT. When the path cleared up, you got back in again?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Right.

Mr. HUBERT. Was the window on the right down?

Sergeant PUTNAM. The window was down.

Mr. HUBERT. Now, when you got to the top of the ramp, what happened? That is when you got to the Main Street, the sidewalk area, and, of course, the street area, would you describe in your own words just what happened? What did you see?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I saw Officer Vaughn and about six persons.

Mr. HUBERT. Where was Vaughn now when you first saw him?

Sergeant PUTNAM. In front of our automobile about the middle of the sidewalk.

Mr. HUBERT. What did he do?

Sergeant PUTNAM. He stepped to the right and about to the curb, or just off of the curb, glanced to his right and looked back and waved us on.

Mr. HUBERT. You went into Main Street and turned left?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Right.

Mr. HUBERT. Did he go very much out into the street to assist you to get out?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. You say he stepped off of the curb, though?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Possibly one step off of the curb.

Mr. HUBERT. And then he looked to his right and his left? How did he do that?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I—

Mr. HUBERT. How was he standing? With his back to you?

Sergeant PUTNAM. My impression was he was facing us and my impression was that he glanced to his right, which would be to the westbound traffic and Lieutenant Pierce, the driver, was on the left and in a position to see the east-bound traffic.

Mr. HUBERT. In other words, turned his head so that the back of his head would have been towards the Main Street ramp?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. And he stepped off of the curb just about 2 feet?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Well, I would say in one step, 2 feet.

Mr. HUBERT. Didn't go into the middle of the street?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. And he waved you on?

Sergeant PUTNAM. He immediately turned back and glanced like this [indicating], and turned back, and was walking back to his position on the sidewalk

Mr. HUBERT. Would you say from the time you all reached the Main Street exit point to the time that Vaughn started to walk back to his position, it took only a matter of 3 or 4 seconds?

Sergeant PUTNAM. We didn't even stop the car. It would be very few seconds.

Mr. HUBERT. No stop at all?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Just a—to prevent from hitting a pedestrian walking on the sidewalk. Now, there wasn't one walking, but to take a quick glance like you would do approaching a sidewalk, the car was slowed, and immediately—at this time everything happened at once. He slowed the car, Vaughn walked and glanced and waved us on. He accelerated and we went on to Main Street.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you turn your head to the right when you got to the sidewalk?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you see anybody?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Was not a soul?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Didn't see anyone in sight in—except Officer Vaughn and the persons that I say were on the left.

Mr. HUBERT. In other words, there was nobody coming up Main Street towards Harwood?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I can't say that there was not. I can say that I didn't see them.

Mr. HUBERT. That is all you can do, of course.

Sergeant PUTNAM. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. And there was no one standing there that you saw?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Specifically, now, the man that you later knew to be Jack Ruby, you did not see either walking up, or standing by on the Pearl Street side of Main Street exit?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you look at the people on the left side?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I only glanced. I just——

Mr. HUBERT. Can you identify anybody?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Not a person.

Mr. HUBERT. Can you specifically say that Ruby was not there?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. All you can say is, I take it then, the man you have since learned to be Ruby was—you didn't see him?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. If he was there, you didn't see him?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I didn't see him.

Mr. HUBERT. Can you go as far as to say, turning again to your right-hand side, that there was nobody on your right-hand side at all?

Sergeant PUTNAM. I can say that there was no one in the immediate vicinity within, I would say—well, it was apparent that—15 feet away from me I saw a group of people standing, and to the right——

Mr. HUBERT. On the——

Sergeant PUTNAM. To the left, and to the right I saw no one in the immediate vicinity of us.

Mr. HUBERT. That is immediately upon coming out?

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's right.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you see the person who has subsequently been identified as Jack Ruby among the reporters that he pushed through?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you see any such person come down the ramp as you were going up the ramp?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. How far down Main Street to Pearl do you think you can see?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Well, it is a clear view to Pearl Street, but my attention would not have been directed by someone half a block away. It would have made no impression.

Mr. HUBERT. But, your thought is that there was nobody at least as far as a half a block away?

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's my belief.

Mr. HUBERT. And Vaughn turned immediately back and went back to his position?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Was walking back in that direction. In other words, we could have been close enough to touch him.

Mr. HUBERT. As you passed, he was walking back.

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's correct.

Mr. HUBERT. And therefore, he was facing towards the entrance?

Sergeant PUTNAM. That's correct.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you hear him call to anybody up there?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Well, is there anything else you would like to say?

Sergeant PUTNAM. Well—

Mr. HUBERT. Any other facts that aren't covered in the documents which we have identified here as 5071, 5072 and 5073?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. I do not believe you have been interviewed by any member of the Commission's staff at all prior to this deposition?

Sergeant PUTNAM. No, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. All right, I think that is all. If any fact that has not been developed in these reports and in your testimony should come to your attention, I hope you will free to let us know about it if you think it is a material fact. All we are seeking is to get the facts. That's all. And if, by chance, you have forgotten something and you should remember it at a later date, please contact us through the United States attorney's office and tell them that you have a fact that you would like to report that you have overlooked and we will make arrangements to see you again.

But at this time, we will give you the 3 days' notice.

I thank you, sir.

TESTIMONY OF WILLIE B. SLACK

The testimony of Willie B. Slack was taken at 11 a.m., on March 31, 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.

Mr. HUBERT. This is the deposition of Patrolman Willie—is that Willie? Not William?

Mr. SLACK. Willie.

Mr. HUBERT. Willie B. Slack. Mr. Slack, my name is Leon Hubert. I am a member of the advisory staff of the general counsel of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. Under the rules provided by the Executive Order 11130, dated November 29, 1963, and the joint resolution of Congress, No. 137, together with the rules of procedure adopted by the President's Commission in conformance with the Executive order and joint resolution, I have been authorized to take a sworn deposition from you, Mr. Slack.

I state to you now that the general nature of the Commission's inquiry is to ascertain, evaluate and report upon the facts relating to the assassination of President Kennedy, and the subsequent violent death of Lee Harvey Oswald. In particular to you, Mr. Slack, the nature of the inquiry today is to determine the facts that you know about the death of Oswald, and any other pertinent facts you may know about the general inquiry. Now, Mr. Slack, you have appeared here today by virtue of the general request made to Chief Curry by J. Lee Rankin, who is general counsel of the President's Commission. Under the rules adopted by this Commission, you are entitled to a 3-day written notice that your deposition is going to be taken, but the rules also provide that you may waive the 3-day written notice if you see fit to do so. And are you now willing to waive that 3-day notice?

Mr. SLACK. I do.