

Joe had a style of his own, so Leonard wanted to play behind Joe's style. So Mr. Ruby tried to point out to Leonard to pick up a style of his own, because Joe was gone and he got another job, and to try to pick up a style and quit trying to sell Joe, because he would be just helping Joe.

Joe left, and then people come out, and Leonard kept trying to play Joe's pattern, but we didn't have the band, because we didn't know how Joe played and everybody had a different style, and Leonard kept wanting to play behind Joe, because he had been working with Joe.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did Joe happen to quit?

Mr. AYCOX. I don't know why he quit or nothing like that, but I just heard he was going to quit, and maybe he got a job paying more money.

Mr. GRIFFIN. On how many Sundays during the time you were with Ruby did Mr. Ruby come out to the club and give you instructions?

Mr. AYCOX. I think about 3. I don't think I stayed there over 3 weeks, maybe.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he come out every Sunday?

Mr. AYCOX. He come out every Sunday.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When did you rehearse on Sundays?

Mr. AYCOX. Well, suppose to rehearse from about 1 o'clock to 3. Sometimes from 1:30 to 2:30, something like that. Sometimes we rehearsed to 3.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he come out and stay the entire time?

Mr. AYCOX. Yes; he came out. Sometimes he might be there a little earlier than the band, or maybe the band might get there a little early, but he would be out there to open up, and then we were rehearsing.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I want to hand you what I have marked for the purpose of identification as James Aycox Depositon, July 24, 1964, Exhibit No. 1. This is a document that consists of two pages, and it purports to be a copy of an interview report prepared by FBI Agent Hughes, who had this interview with you on December 14, 1963. Take your time and read it over. I want to know whether that is an accurate report of what you told him on December 14.

Mr. AYCOX (reading report). This was not the fellow. There was another fellow here that was a member of the band. There were five of us.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Who was the fifth fellow?

Mr. AYCOX. Milton Thomas.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Is that Brother Bear?

Mr. AYCOX. This is right [returning document].

Mr. GRIFFIN. If that is all right, then if you would sign it on the first page where I have marked.

Mr. AYCOX. Right here?

Mr. GRIFFIN. That is all right; yes.

Mr. AYCOX. This is where you want me to sign?

Mr. GRIFFIN. You can sign it near the top where I put the marks on the page.

Mr. AYCOX (signing). Both pages?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Why don't you initial the second page?

Mr. AYCOX. Initial this one?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes; just put your initials there.

(Mr. Aycox initials.)

Mr. GRIFFIN. Thank you very much. I appreciate your coming in this morning.

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS STEWART PALMER

The testimony of Thomas Stewart Palmer, was taken at 10:25 a.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 start by introducing myself again. I am Burt Griffin, and I am a member of the general counsel staff of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy.

I want to tell you a little bit about the Commission and what we expect to do here today before I administer the oath and ask you to testify. The Commission was set up pursuant to an Executive order issued by President Johnson on November 29, 1963, and also pursuant to a joint resolution of Congress. Under these two official acts, the Commission has been directed to inquire into, evaluate, and report back to President Johnson on all the facts that relate to the assassination of President Kennedy and the death of Lee Harvey Oswald. We have asked you to come here today, Mr. Palmer, particularly because you have had some past dealings with Jack Ruby, and we are hopeful that you can shed some light on the kind of person that Jack Ruby was.

Now, under the rules and regulations of the Commission, I have been designated to take your deposition here today. Before we ask anybody to be sworn, the rules of the Commission provide that you are entitled to a 3-day written notice of your presence here, and I will ask you first of all if you have received a letter from the Commission 3 days before?

Mr. PALMER. I have.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you have any questions about the testimony that is about to be taken?

Mr. PALMER. None.

Mr. GRIFFIN. If you will raise your right hand, I will administer the oath.

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

Mr. PALMER. I do.

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

Mr. PALMER. Thomas Stewart Palmer.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where do you now live?

Mr. PALMER. 2728 West Davis.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How are you employed?

Mr. PALMER. I am self-employed, an entertainer.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What sort of entertaining do you do?

Mr. PALMER. Magician and comedian.

Mr. GRIFFIN. In the Dallas area?

Mr. PALMER. Primarily.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Are you employed in any particular place?

Mr. PALMER. Not at the present time.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were you formerly an official of the AGVA?

Mr. PALMER. I was branch manager.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where was that?

Mr. PALMER. Here in Dallas.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long were you branch manager for AGVA?

Mr. PALMER. About a year and a half.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When did your employment begin and when did it end?

Mr. PALMER. It ended in February of this year and began—when would it be, a year and a half prior to that?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Sometime in 1963?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, during the period that you were branch manager of AGVA, did you have occasion to have some dealings with Jack Ruby?

Mr. PALMER. Frequently.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Had you known Ruby before you became branch manager?

Mr. PALMER. Slightly.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How had you happened to know him?

Mr. PALMER. Well, he had employed me as a fill-in entertainer on, I believe, about two occasions. Other than that, I had never met him before.

Mr. GRIFFIN. In what clubs did you work for him?

Mr. PALMER. At the Carousel.

Mr. GRIFFIN. At the time you were working for him, what was your relationship with him as an employee, how did you find him as an employer?

Mr. PALMER. No different than most. Perhaps he felt he was doing a lot for the entertainers, but this is not uncommon. Most entrepreneurs feel they are impresarios or something.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When you became branch manager of AGVA, you had occasion, I take it, to deal with him on a number of times?

Mr. PALMER. Yes, sir.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Can you tell us, try to reconstruct chronologically how your relationship with him as an AGVA representative proceeded.

Mr. PALMER. Well, it was quite amicable in all instances. The single element that certainly perturbed me most, from the standpoint of being a branch manager of AGVA, was that Jack was reluctant and hesitant to meet all of the obligations of a union house as that is, and it was constantly necessary for me to visit him and prod him.

With the advent of the McClellan investigation, AGVA became quite sensitive to certain practices that Jack and other clubs freely subscribed to, and in the latter months of our association, I had been collecting data that indicated Jack was continuing to violate certain rules of AGVA that could have been awkward for him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What were the rules that you felt he was violating?

Mr. PALMER. Well, AGVA has no jurisdiction over what is called a B-girl or a girl who is primarily in a club to promote consumption of liquor and services. However, they do not want their members, AGVA members to engage in this practice. Jack very frequently made it clear to our members whom he engaged that it was expected of them, and those who were not in great demand found they could stay at his club for a long time if they were to sit down and have a convivial drink with a customer.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did you go about collecting this information on it?

Mr. PALMER. Jack was impulsive and he would make an instant enemy as quickly as he would win him back as a friend, and it was not difficult to find a girl who had had a slight altercation with him who would sign an affidavit indicating that Jack had demanded that she associate with the customers in the capacity of a B-drinker only.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Does AGVA have such affidavits, or did they have such affidavits?

Mr. PALMER. They do not at the present time. I have.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you have those with you?

Mr. PALMER. I don't have them with me. I can get them for you within the hour.

Mr. GRIFFIN. If you would, I would appreciate that very much. Do you remember right now some of the names of the people who swore out affidavits against him?

Mr. PALMER. I collected only three, because that was sufficient proof. However, in conversation with all of them, they indicated that this was the truth, but they were hesitant to put it in writing. Little Lynn, I believe, was one of the girls. I don't know her full name. I would have to look it up in the AGVA files. There was an exotic girl from New Orleans.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Jada?

Mr. PALMER. Jada.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were there any other rules that Jack was violating?

Mr. PALMER. Not knowingly. He was hesitant in his payment of welfare to AGVA for his personnel. He was not the only one. This is a common short-coming of most club owners.

His affiliation with the Vegas Club, was an affiliation he should not have been affiliated with, since the club was theoretically in his sister's name, and I had been given to believe that his operation here was separate. It could be a point of contention with AGVA.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Why shouldn't he have been associated with the Vegas Club, under your rules?

Mr. PALMER. Well, our rules are that an owner who cannot subscribe but only partially to our union, if his business is all entertainment business, then he must have been either entirely AGVA, or not at all. I am quite sure this was why the Vegas was presented as being in his sister's name.

Mr. GRIFFIN. From your experience with Jack, were you able to form any impression of the extent of employee turnover that he had?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did his turnover compare to that of other employers in the business?

Mr. PALMER. Well, it was great, the rate of turnover, until he would eventually hire an entertainer who was either capable of standing the pace that he set in his club, or until he hired someone who wanted to settle down in Dallas and was willing to work for a little less and perhaps a little more frequently per night.

Another of Jack's possible infringements on AGVA rules and regulations, and it was never clarified in AGVA, was his continuous show policy. This made his finding a new master of ceremonies, whenever it was necessary, virtually impossible, because there are few emcees who can go on and on all evening.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did AGVA have a policy against continuous shows?

Mr. PALMER. Not at the outset. There was confusion in this respect between the New York office and the west coast office. I remember Mazzie's office and Jackie Bright's office—Bright was ousted and Bobby Faye made several directives that were countermanded by the west coast, and the union became rather decentralized in its authority.

Mr. GRIFFIN. But eventually did somebody who had jurisdiction over Dallas issue a rule of some sort that there should be no continuous shows?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Who was that?

Mr. PALMER. I issued it at the direction of Bobby Faye of New York City, who was the executive administrator.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was that before or after the President was assassinated?

Mr. PALMER. Before.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long before?

Mr. PALMER. Probably about 6 months before.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What was Jack Ruby's response to that rule?

Mr. PALMER. Jack liked to pretend and let me know he was pretending to comply fully. Agreeably, I should say. His mode of compliance again was only a halfhearted thing, and he did take breaks which then split the show into four shows a night. But I informed him that the breaks weren't adequate; they should be longer.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long were the breaks?

Mr. PALMER. They were supposed to be 40 minutes. He was taking a 20- to 30-minute break. I had to rely almost entirely on the emcees to clock this, other than sit in the club myself. When I sat in the club myself, they occurred. When I didn't, I knew they weren't occurring, so I had to rely on the emcees. And the emcees relied on Jack Ruby for employment, and often were not too stringent in clocking the breaks. So this, with the affidavits of B-drinking could be considered as creating a little pressure on Jack.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You mentioned before that some of the employees couldn't take the pace that Jack set. What did you have in mind when you referred to pace?

Mr. PALMER. I meant strictly from a legal standpoint. The continuous show policy; the idea of being on the premises at all times; plus Jack's personality was not constantly one way or the other. It was a highly fluctuating thing and often led to misunderstandings.

Many masters of ceremony quit because they felt Jack was directing from the floor, which he has a right to do, but not to the embarrassment of an entertainer.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How would he direct from the floor?

Mr. PALMER. He would indicate on occasion that a dancer midway through her dance should cut it short, or the master of ceremonies should cut a specific routine of his short, often while he was doing the routine.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were you ever told, or did you ever observe any kind of performances that Jack Ruby didn't approve of?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Let's focus strictly on the kind of joke that would be told in the club. Were there any kind of jokes you learned he didn't permit to be told?

Mr. PALMER. He wouldn't permit racial or religious jokes of obvious dirty nature. It was not uncommon for one master of ceremonies to tell several of his routine in colored dialect, Negro dialect, or Jewish dialect, but this was

screened carefully, and he was very careful to see that it was not—it could have been risqué, but not filthy. In other words, he ran a very close check on certain types of profanity. On the other hand, he was very free in permitting a master of ceremonies his choice of material.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did you happen to learn about this?

Mr. PALMER. Well, now, not myself first hand. It was by Earl Norman who complained to me one day that he had been telling this joke in Jack's establishment for several weeks, and apparently Jack had not heard it, and asked him to delete it from his routine. Of course, this was a blow to Earl in two ways. First of all, being told what material to choose, and secondly, that he hadn't been heard for 2 weeks.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember what the joke was?

Mr. PALMER. I cannot. I have been trying to think what it was. It was an innocuous thing to me.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was it a religious joke or a racial joke? Or was it a sexual joke?

Mr. PALMER. I cannot honestly recall. It was an unimportant thing at the time to me. I talked to Jack about his censoring Earl in this particular instance, but as I recall, the joke wasn't mentioned.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you ever or did anybody ever tell you prior to the time that President Kennedy was assassinated that Jack didn't permit them to tell jokes about the Kennedy family?

Mr. PALMER. On the contrary, I heard jokes about the Kennedy family and most other political figures in his establishment by Wally Weston. I don't know whether—it was not a large part of his routine, but I believe I did hear him use them.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did any of his employees ever complain to you about Jack having physically abused them?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Which employees, or which employee?

Mr. PALMER. Well, it was not what would constitute a complaint against the employer, so I couldn't follow it up from an AGVA or union standpoint. But I know that he did strike Earl Norman on occasion and call him a drunk and was detrimental to his career by calling other establishments where Earl was employed, and indicating that he was an inebriate.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Earl tell you this?

Mr. PALMER. Earl told me this, and our booking agent, Pappy Dolson, indicated that he was having difficulty booking Earl because of things that were being said, and he didn't say that Jack had said them. Later Jack admitted to me that he was the one that had said these things, and he said he was sorry for them. And I believe at later date he did take Earl back to work for him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was this instance sometime before the President came to Dallas?

Mr. PALMER. Yes. I think he struck Jada on occasion, or as she put it, "shoved me around."

Several of the other girls had been manhandled by Jack for various reasons. I am not certain what they all are. Jack has a tendency to be frugal to a point of not always being honest on occasion. The girls would draw money in advance, and sometimes his bookkeeping was too much in his favor for a very small amount. On the other hand, he was quick to give them money if they needed it for anything. To buy a radio, he would give them \$40, but come payday, it might be \$42 he thought he gave, and it would take moments of understanding before he coughed up the other \$2.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember the circumstances under which Jada quit working for Jack?

Mr. PALMER. Partially.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did she tell you about them, or did Jack?

Mr. PALMER. Yes; as a matter of fact, she filed a complaint with me and he filed a complaint with me. Evidently, I believe the police were called in by an agent to get it straightened out. Jack maintained, after she had been there quite some time, that her act which originally was not suitable for Dallas—however, it did pass the vice squad critic—or claimed that she had reverted back to a New Orleans type of dancing, which included front bumps and a

couple of other things they don't like here—and was more suggestive than it should be.

Jack rushed to the light pillar and turned the lights out on her. This was after he had thought that her contract was going to expire. However, he failed to negotiate renewal of her contract subsequently. I indicated to him her contract would have to run, despite his failure, which I am sure was on purpose, to endorse renewal—would have to run until the completion of the week. He had anticipated getting some new talent in which would double him up on his budget, and he wanted Jada out of there right away. I think this is what prompted his criticism of her dance that evening. I had been in there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Let me interrupt you. Had he mentioned to you that he wanted to get rid of Jada before he turned the lights out on her?

Mr. PALMER. He came into my office about a day and a half prior to that to ask my thinking on the contract, and the contract that I had on file in the office indicated that he was not obligated to keep her. However, the contract that she had that had been signed on one occasion indicated that it was to continue on past this date. He had not notified my office of the renewal. This was not uncommon in most offices. Renewals are by mutual consent, and very frequently the only signed copy is the entertainer's. Jada knew the rules, and she should have had them signed. She did on one occasion.

However, being the artist's representative primarily, termination had to comply with our AGVA rules which assured her of at least the end of the week, and if she were agreeable, that is fine. If she weren't, she should have held it for another week. So with this in mind, I told this to Jack: "I will see what can be done about getting you off the hook at the end of the week." And he said, "Great". Then I discussed with Jada and she was quite adamant. She was going to complete her engagement. And there was a little hard feeling because she said nobody is going to shove me around. Then later, 2 days later or so, approximately, the incident of the light.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Why did Jack want to replace her with another act?

Mr. PALMER. First of all, her salary was unusual for his establishment. It was much higher than he was accustomed to paying. I was surprised that he kept her as long as he had. With the advent of the affidavit, I realized that her value to him was other than just simply as an entertainer.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did she file the affidavit against him before he came in and told you he wanted to fire her?

Mr. PALMER. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Jack come to AGVA with any problems about his competitors?

Mr. PALMER. Frequently.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What kind of complaints did he have about his competitors?

Mr. PALMER. That they were scheming to put him out of business, and that they were practicing unfair tactics both from a civil standpoint as well as union standpoint.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Can you be specific about the scheming that they did, that he complained they did?

Mr. PALMER. Well, he claimed that the amateur night, which Mr. Barney Weinstein originated, I think, many years ago, in Dallas, was taken up by his brother Abe at the Colony, not because Abe needed it, but because it blocked him out of using that same night as an amateur night for his own draw, Jack Ruby's, and this was a consolidated effort between the two brothers to put him out of business, the Carousel. He was constantly critical of their contribution to the AGVA welfare, while he himself was decidedly delinquent.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he think they were more delinquent than he was?

Mr. PALMER. No; he just thought they were delinquent, and he was bringing that to my attention while trying to keep his own delinquency out of the topic of conversation. Frequently people he had let go at his club might go to work for Barney. I don't believe Abe would ever use them. I think he did on one or two occasions, but Jack was then always convinced that these people were, to use his terminology, bad-mouthing him or talking unfairly about him behind his back. Actually, his club was rated by AGVA at a lesser rate than

the other two, which permitted him to employ exotics and masters of ceremonies and specialty acts at a lower rate, and I often pointed this out to him. He then complained it should be even lower but it could not possibly be.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Why was he permitted to pay them at a lesser rate?

Mr. PALMER. Clubs are rated deluxe, A, B, C, and D and his was far from being deluxe, which allowed about a \$10 a week less minimum.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember what his rating was?

Mr. PALMER. I think it was a B house.

Mr. GRIFFIN. The rating is deluxe, and below that is A and B?

Mr. PALMER. Yes. The other two houses, I believe the Theatre Lounge is an A and the Colony Club is a B, but it never, he never practiced minimum rate.

See, we only guaranteed the minimum rate. The artist could negotiate for anything above that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What factor did you take into account in determining what rate?

Mr. PALMER. These houses had already been rated prior to my coming into office here, and I didn't feel that there was any necessity of reevaluating them.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I didn't mean you in particular, but what are the standards of giving new ratings in AGVA?

Mr. PALMER. There is controversy. I rate them primarily on seating capacity, cover charge, and type of show budget. It has not been delineated clearly in any of the offices.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Jack Ruby complain to you about the amateur nights that the Weinstains were running?

Mr. PALMER. Continuously. He stated that he didn't like to run them himself, but he had to in order to meet the competition. The other two brothers, the same thing.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What did Jack ask you to do?

Mr. PALMER. He was constantly trying to have them disallowed by AGVA. According to the first directive I received in office, they were to be immediately discontinued.

However, I believe it was Abe Weinstein's conversation, either in person or by phone—I have forgotten which—I had both with Irving Mazzie, that they were allowed to continue until clarification of the amateur shows could be had. I was instructed to allow them to continue. It was not indicated that it should be just simply for the Weinstains, but also for Jack Ruby, and any other club that might be in my territory. I believe there was a club in Oklahoma that was also contemplating it. At that time there became an upset in our executive offices, and it was not clear to the people taking over whether they should adhere to the previous policies.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When did this first order come out that there was to be no amateur nights?

Mr. PALMER. In October, I believe it was, originally.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Of 1963 or 1962?

Mr. PALMER. 1962.

Mr. GRIFFIN. 1962?

Mr. PALMER. I believe that is when I first received the letter indicating it was to all club owners.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Jack Ruby discontinue amateur night at any time, to your knowledge?

Mr. PALMER. Yes; prior to my, well, unpleasantness, he began a series of dishes, giving away dishes Thursday and hi-fi's and everything else, and had discontinued his amateur nights, and made quite a thing that he was complying wholeheartedly. But it took him almost 4 or 5 months to get around to complying.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was he still complying in November of 1963?

Mr. PALMER. Yes; I believe, to the best of my knowledge, he was.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you recall in November of 1963 that Jack was attempting to persuade AGVA to terminate the amateur shows at the Weinstein club?

Mr. PALMER. Oh, yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Can you tell us about what he did?

Mr. PALMER. He called Irving Mazzie on several occasions, and without my receiving any confirmation either from Irving or from New York as to what these conversations embodied, he instructed me that he was right, Jack Ruby, and I agreed. However, I had a request to have the other clubs shut down because of their noncompliance disregarded by New York. So it became my policy, and probably the reason for my termination with AGVA was that one or the other of the officers either the west coast or the east coast, would have to come in and straighten this out.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You were getting conflicting orders, I take it?

Mr. PALMER. Yes; I was. My New York office and my regional office were giving me conflicting orders.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Irving Mazzie, I remember, was telling you to shut them down; is that right?

Mr. PALMER. He did not at first. The New York office told me to shut them down, and Irving Mazzie said give them time. And there was this banter back and forth on the west coast. They had, I think, the Pink Pussy Cat and the Body Shop, were continuing their amateur nights and Irving said to permit the clubs here to continue until they ceased on the west coast. Eventually they ceased on the west coast, but there was still this complete uncertainty, in my mind, about here, because he continued to permit me to permit them to have their amateur nights.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you have any information that the Weinsteins were talking to Mr. Mazzie or Mr. Faye?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. So that while Jack Ruby was trying to persuade AGVA to shut the Weinsteins down as far as amateur night was concerned, the Weinsteins were talking to other people?

Mr. PALMER. Yes. As a matter of fact, perhaps it is my suggestion in fact, I forwarded a letter from Barney Weinstein to, I believe it was, Bobby Faye at that time. Yes, it was—concerning his part in the establishment of the amateur nights and that it was definitely a necessary thing for him to remain in business.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember that on or about the 13th of November of 1963 after Ruby had contacted Bobby Faye, you sent out a letter to people in your district advising them that amateur nights were not permitted?

Mr. PALMER. That is correct.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, after that letter was sent out, what did the Weinsteins do?

Mr. PALMER. I think Abe Weinstein suspended the thing, the amateur nights for 2 weeks. I am not sure. I know that Jack was subscribing wholeheartedly to the memo. And Barney indicated that he was going to relinquish his affiliation with AGVA.

It became necessary then for me to indicate to our membership that while it was legal for them to accept employment wherever they wished, if it were in violation of our rules as a union, we were obligated to exercise a fine on them. And this, I believe, right up to the minute of the show, Barney indicated an indifference. Then he realized that this would do two things.

First of all, put several of his people he liked out of business, or in jeopardy, let us say, to the amount of \$100, I believe, per person. He decided to withdraw himself that evening and try to negotiate again with New York. And again, there was much confusion.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Jack Ruby ever accuse you of showing favoritism?

Mr. PALMER. Frequently. On the other hand, I had to point out to him that I exercised extreme leniency in his welfare, to which he agreed, and was placated with this sort of thing.

Mr. GRIFFIN. To your knowledge, were there other people in the business who were also trying to get these amateur nights stopped?

Mr. PALMER. Yes. In fact, Irving Mazzie on the west coast, I believe, came into civil court with the, I think it was, Body Shop, and received several threats on his life.

The same thing occurred, I believe, in the State of Washington in Seattle. There were three areas that seemed to subscribe more strongly than the others to that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was Jack Ruby the only nightclub operator who was trying to get the amateur nights stopped, or were there others?

Mr. PALMER. Those who were not subscribing to it were not the least bit interested, in my area.

On the west coast, yes, there were other nightclub owners who were interested in having it stopped. I think this was essentially the time of the entire movement, but Jack was the only nightclub operator who was virtually trying to stop it.

Abe wanted, in his own words, to cease, but felt from a business standpoint that he had to continue. He said it was a burden. I can see where it would be to your regular show.

The Colony Club was situated so that it did not require this gimmick at any-time really to pep up business.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I want to ask you about some of Ruby's employees in particular. Was Tammi True an AGVA member?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was Kathy Kay?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was Little Lynn?

Mr. PALMER. Not exactly. She had placed a down payment, and I don't believe she ever finished payment.

However, AGVA permits, as long as you are making a conscientious effort to pay your initiation dues, a 60-day period. During that 60 days, they can work on a temporary card type basis.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you know why Kathy Kay did not return to work for Jack Ruby's club after Jack was arrested?

Mr. PALMER. No. I know only that she said she was afraid to and wanted to get out of town. I understood that she was leaving town.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What was she afraid about?

Mr. PALMER. I don't know. She was terribly upset, of course, about the assassination, as everyone was, and she did not confide in me as to the reason for this.

Mr. GRIFFIN. But she did talk to you about it?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When did she first come in and talk to you about it?

Mr. PALMER. It was a Tuesday after the murder.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did she come to your office?

Mr. PALMER. I think she called. I remember seeing her in person but I can't recall whether it was in the office or in the coffee shop downstairs. No, it was in the office, because she had been into the office of Pappy Dolson's booking agent on the same floor with AGVA in the Interurban Building, and I believe, again I am not sure, I know it was in the Interurban Building or the immediate surroundings and she was inquiring as to her pay status because of this.

And of course, this being a new thing, I wanted to check it out. Mr. Paul, I was not aware, would take over the club at that time. So only after talking to him did I discover that yes, her contract would continue to be valid and there would be a club operating, and I advised her of this.

She said, "I don't care, I just want to get out of town. I don't like it."

This particular club clientele may not have been as selective as some of the other clubs in town, and there could have been many reasons. I know from her own verbal statements, that she had been requested to be convivial, which is above and beyond the requirements of an entertainer. However, she would not sign an affidavit to that effect, and frequently associations were continued independent of the club that would make her continuing there awkward to her.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you know whether at that time she had a relationship of some sort with a Dallas police officer?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did she mention that as any reason for not wanting to continue to work?

Mr. PALMER. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you have any information that that was the reason?

Mr. PALMER. I don't know. No, I haven't. I gave it no importance. I assigned no importance to it at all at that time.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Can you give us any suggestions as to what might have motivated her to leave so abruptly? Has anything come to your attention that might suggest consideration?

Mr. PALMER. She had frequently wanted to leave prior to that—she stated this to me—and she couldn't. As a matter of fact, at one time she had discontinued exotic dancing entirely for a period of a month or so, and evidently came back to work at Jack Ruby's.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Why had she wanted to leave?

Mr. PALMER. She said she had a child and she wanted to get into some other business at that time. This was quite sometime prior to that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. As long as 6 months or a year before?

Mr. PALMER. Six months at least. She had indicated that out of respect for her association with a member of the Dallas police force, that she would probably cease dancing, or that she wanted to.

Mr. GRIFFIN. In other words, when she talked with you—I want to see if I understand this correctly—when she talked with you 6 months or more before Oswald was shot, she indicated that because at that time she had a relationship with this Dallas police officer, she thought it would be best that she get out of the business?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You smile. Why do you smile and say yes? Is there anything more?

Mr. PALMER. No more than I gained the impression that this was not a business that she felt would be compatible with his position, and for no reason other than that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was it known to members of the police department that she was dating this fellow, living with this fellow even before the President was shot?

Mr. PALMER. It was of such common knowledge to all entertainers, and his presence in the club with her and after in places where entertainers usually went at 1 or 2 o'clock to have breakfast, that I doubt that their association could have escaped the attention of some of the other members of the force.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you have any information about how friendly Jack Ruby was with the police officer that she was dating?

Mr. PALMER. Quite friendly.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Can you tell us how you know that?

Mr. PALMER. Well, I saw no outward signs of any friendship other than that of an acquaintance between the two, but he did introduce me to him, and on occasion, the three of us were at a table briefly when I would drop in late just prior to closing time.

His presence was honored, as mine was, without cover charge. And frequently Jack would buy us a beer or coke or whatever we were having.

But I didn't feel that there was any animosity. Or let me say, I was not aware that there was or had been or possibly would be any animosity. Knowing Jack, I feel that he was perhaps nurturing this acquaintanceship to strengthen any position that a person in his business might sooner or later need.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you have any information that this police officer might have helped Jack Ruby get into the basement of the police department on Sunday?

Mr. PALMER. No. As a matter of fact, this is the first time that I have even thought of that. I would not know. I could give you no idea at all on that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Little Lynn have any occasion to talk to you about her relationship with Jack Ruby after Oswald was shot?

Mr. PALMER. No. As a matter of fact, I didn't see Little Lynn after that. Actually, I knew she was employed sporadically there because of what I assume was slightly neurotic reasons. I didn't see her for a period of maybe a week before that happened in the club.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you have some reason to think that she was a mentally disturbed person?

Mr. PALMER. I was certain of that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Can you tell us why it is you feel that way, and what do you think her problem was?

I don't want you to be a psychiatrist, but in lay terms, what was the difficulty?

Mr. PALMER. Well, she was associated with a young gentleman more nearly her age who was eager to have her accumulate wealth. What he did to achieve this, I don't know. I can only assume.

I believe she thought herself pregnant, or was. I had no proof whether she was or not. I did see her have convulsions and spasms that I had seen before and realized that this was more a nervous condition that often precedes pregnancy, but this seemed to be to me, again, as I say, a little more of an emotional thing rather than a physiological thing.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You didn't have any indication that she was taking narcotics?

Mr. PALMER. I had none. I have none at the present time. By narcotics, I don't know what you mean.

Some of the entertainers, the girls have weight problems and often they are on a, I don't know what the pill is, it is a black thing that doctors prescribe. I have seen several eating them, that I know of them.

Mr. GRIFFIN. They are habit forming?

Mr. PALMER. I don't know. I believe they are. I don't know what they are. A friend of mine in a different business is the one that described them to me.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What was Little Lynn's boyfriend or husband or whatever he is attempting to do for her?

Mr. PALMER. I had that feeling. I had no proof of that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Anything else that you think he was attempting to do?

Mr. PALMER. Not that I am aware of, no. I thought that was what it was, plus having her in a club where he could call as her manager and probably circulate and pander for her.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you happen to know why Tammi True quit working for Jack Ruby shortly before the President was assassinated?

Mr. PALMER. She quit several times before. Again, Tammi was quite critical of Jack's bookkeeping and frequently overstepped her boundaries as an employee because of her association with Mr. Paul, I believe, at that time. She was living with him off and on.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you have occasion to visit any of the night clubs on November 22 or November 23?

Mr. PALMER. Could you give me the days of the week?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Well, this would be the Friday night after the President was assassinated, and the Saturday night.

Mr. PALMER. I would have to look at the records at AGVA. I believe I did.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you recall whether you were in Abe's Colony Club or the Theatre Lounge on one of those nights?

Mr. PALMER. I probably was. I usually made those clubs as I came downtown. I don't recall specifically though.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Specifically, do you have any specific recollection as to whether those clubs were open on any one of those nights?

Mr. PALMER. Let's see, President was assassinated on what?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Friday.

Mr. PALMER. Friday. All the clubs were closed on Friday night.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How about Saturday?

Mr. PALMER. There was some—actually, the two clubs, Colony Club and the Theatre Lounge closed, and I think there was some doubt as to whether Ruby's would close, and I had to determine that. I believe Ruby was closed until the following Monday. I am not certain.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you have any recollection of being in the Colony Club or Theatre Lounge on Saturday night?

Mr. PALMER. No, I don't; I am sorry.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I don't believe I have any more questions. Is there anything that you can think of that the Commission ought to know either about Ruby or about the murder of Oswald, or about the assassination of the President, that you might want to offer independently of any questions that I have asked you?

Mr. PALMER. I suppose my other statements are available to you?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes. It is customary that we give you these to look at to sign, but I am afraid that it didn't get included in the group of things that I brought with me from Washington, so I don't have them to hand to you. I have one short

statement that you made on November 26, but it has simply to do with Buddy King.

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I would like to have you look at it, but I don't think it is germane to what we have talked about today.

Mr. PALMER. I was thinking about my perhaps excitement over the phone call from Chicago.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you want to tell us about that?

Mr. PALMER. Well, if it is not redundant or repetitious.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now this is the call that Wilma Hughes received?

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Would you tell us about that?

Mr. PALMER. Well, I recognized immediately on television, Jack. Prior to that, well Wilma called me stating that she had talked to Conrad Brown who she called Jack, who also is known professionally as Alton Sharp.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When did Wilma call you?

Mr. PALMER. Early Sunday morning. And she said will you be seeing Jack today. The reason I assumed at the time she asked me was that she did not herself frequent the clubs as a representative. I said, "It is doubtful."

She said "Jackie (meaning Alton Sharp) said to tell Jack Ruby not to send a letter, it would do no good now." And I said, "That is cryptic, what does it mean?"

And she said, "I don't know, but be sure and tell Jack today." With no particular emphasis on the word today.

I said, "I hadn't planned on seeing Jack Ruby, but if I do, I would relay the message." And then later the murder, and I could not quite correlate any reason why Chicago was indicating to people in my office, in my jurisdiction, anything that would pertain to AGVA, so I simply relayed this, and perhaps became over-concerned with it.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Have you since learned of anything which would indicate what that telephone call was?

Mr. PALMER. The reason was given to me, but I don't accept it, actually. The story was that the pressure he was putting on Jack to have him conform more closely to AGVA and rules and regulations that prompted him to talk to Alton Sharp in Chicago about writing a letter to New York concerning me. Jack had.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Concerning you? Meaning Tom Palmer?

Mr. PALMER. Right. Jack Ruby had also asked me if he could. I said yes. But I couldn't understand his sending any pertinent data to Chicago, which was not a regional office and had no jurisdiction over this area.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What sort of friendship did Jack have with Conrad Brown or Alton Sharp?

Mr. PALMER. Alton was at one time branch manager here just preceding me.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was Jack particularly friendly with this man?

Mr. PALMER. Alton Sharp indicated to me that he would bear watching and require much work to keep him current. And other than that I felt that Alton Sharp's friendship was no more than it is with any other nightclub operator.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Well, you say that you felt that the explanation that was given to you wasn't satisfactory. I take it you must have something in mind as to what really was taking place.

Mr. PALMER. I didn't know what importance this phone call was at that time, and of course, now, with time having dulled the image of it somewhat, I still cannot understand what was of importance, of such importance that would require a weekend transaction of AGVA business, which is not common on Sunday. However, we are on duty as representatives every day of the week, but this request not to send a letter seemed urgent for some reason when Wilma told me that Alton had relayed this to her in his conversation to her that morning.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you know if Alton Sharp was discharged from his job about that same time?

Mr. PALMER. Shortly thereafter, I believe. I am not sure chronologically.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Could it have been before?

Mr. PALMER. I couldn't say. I would have to check with some information that I have.

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?