

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date December 3, 1963

1

JEREMIAH O'LEARY, better known as JERRY O'LEARY, reporter for the "Washington Evening Star," 225 Virginia Avenue, Washington, D. C., telephone LI 3-5000, residence 405 Prince Street, Alexandria, Virginia, telephone TE 6-7063, furnished the following information:

He was sent to Dallas to cover the story of the assassination of President JOHN F. KENNEDY on November 22, 1963.

At about 9:00 p.m., November 22, 1963, O'LEARY stepped off the elevator on the third floor of the old building, Dallas City Hall, where he observed an individual he now knows to be JACK L. RUBY standing by the elevator giving out cards to the members of the press advertising his night club. RUBY was flashily dressed, including a sport coat and a felt hat and O'LEARY knew immediately he was not a member of the press. He recalls seeing RUBY handing one of his cards to IKE PAPPAS, an out-of-town correspondent. He does not recall where PAPPAS is from.

At this time there were a number of correspondents and representatives of other news media in the city hall and he does not recall anyone asking for his identification as a member of the press.

He observed no one standing guard or checking credentials except that there were two detectives apparently standing guard outside the door to the Homicide and Robbery Division of the Dallas Police Department, keeping out those who were not entitled to admission.

On this night, O'LEARY noted that RUBY appeared to be familiar with the city hall and was what O'LEARY described as a "hanger on."

On November 22, 1963, O'LEARY was at the City Hall in Dallas during a part of the day. He stated occasionally he was requested to show his identification as a member of the press but that there seemed to be no definite organization about the security of the building.

He recalled seeing OSWALD that night about 10:00 p.m. or

on 11/30/63 at Dallas, Texas File # Dallas 44-1639  
by Special Agent BARDWELL D. ODUM:BL Date dictated 12/3/63

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

766

DL 44-1639

2

11:00 p.m. in the show up room in the basement of the City Hall old building. OSWALD was not behind the screen but was out in the witness area of the show-up room, and when the press crowded around him the police removed OSWALD from the room.

O'LEARY recalled he was not stopped in the entrance to the show-up room or asked for his identification at that time.

On November 23, 1963, word was passed from correspondent to correspondent that they should be back at the police department at 10:00 a.m. the next morning, November 24, 1963.

On November 24, 1963, slightly before 10:00 a.m., O'LEARY went to the Dallas City Hall to observe the transfer of LEE HARVEY OSWALD from the city hall to the county jail. He did not see any policemen at the Commerce Street door of the city hall but he did see a policeman in uniform standing on the corner of Harwood and Commerce. O'LEARY entered on the first floor level of the old building on the Commerce Street side and was not challenged or asked for identification. He went to the self-service elevator in the center and on the west side of the building and used this elevator to go to the third floor. As soon as he stepped off the elevator on the third floor of the old building, he was challenged by a uniformed officer of the Dallas Police Department and he exhibited his identification as a newspaper correspondent.

About 10:20 a.m., he and 15 or so other representatives of news media gathered in the anteroom of the office of the Chief of Police and heard a few words from Chief JESSE CURRY. CURRY stated to the newsmen who had gathered that he could have moved OSWALD the night before but he did not want to double cross "you people," meaning the representatives of the press. Someone in the group asked CURRY if there had been any threats against OSWALD and Chief CURRY answered in the affirmative saying that threats had been made against OSWALD's life to the effect that OSWALD would not arrive at the county jail alive. O'LEARY recalled that he asked Chief CURRY about security measures being taken and Chief CURRY stated that they were using an armored car. O'LEARY asked him where they had obtained the armored car and Chief CURRY stated it was obtained from a commercial firm in Dallas. CURRY also stated, "We think we have enough men to handle it." Someone in the group asked Chief CURRY how they were going to get OSWALD down to the basement from

467

DL 44-1639

3

the jail which is located on the fourth floor. Chief CURRY stated that they would use the elevator.

At about 11:16 a.m., there was a buzz of activity throughout the third floor and O'LEARY sensed that OSWALD was coming out. He then hurried from the Chief's anteroom to the lobby by the elevator on the third floor. There he observed a line of uniformed officers and detectives keeping the reporters who were in considerable number against the west wall of the corridor outside of the entrance to the Homicide and Robbery Division. OSWALD appeared in the corridor under guard and the newsmen were ordered by an officer not to move up against or to try to move up against him. He also told them not to ask questions of OSWALD or to shout at him as he passed through the corridor to the elevator.

A minute or so later OSWALD walked out the door of Homicide with two officers, the name of one being LEAVELLE as O'LEARY recalls, immediately followed by several other officers. He stated that the entire group was preceded by Captain WILL FRITZ, Dallas Police Department and that there were perhaps 12-15 policemen in the hall of the third floor in the corridor of the third floor of city hall as OSWALD was brought out of Homicide and Robbery Division and taken to the elevator which is a special elevator used by prisoners and not the public service elevator. In spite of the instructions not to ask questions, several reporters shouted questions at OSWALD and he made a comment to the group, apparently in response to a question, stating, "Yes, I want to get in touch with the American Civil Liberties..." following which his words were broken off by his being taken inside in the anteroom toward the jail elevator. He was only in the corridor for about a minute and as soon as he went into the anteroom to the jail elevator, O'LEARY and IKE PAPPAS ran down the stairs on the third floor to the basement and waited outside the corridor in the garage area of the basement. O'LEARY recalls that there was no attempt to stop them as they went down, although he recalls he had an identification card as a member of the press on hand. He cannot recall anyone looking at it at any time.

When he arrived in the basement OSWALD had not yet arrived on the jail elevator in the basement. He estimated there were at least 50 policemen in the basement and most of them were in uniform. He estimated there was a policeman every three feet on the route that OSWALD was to

-163-

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2052-Continued

DL 44-1639

4

travel between the door coming out from behind the booking counter and the ramp where he was to be loaded into a car or an armored car. O'LEARY did not recall seeing anyone who appeared to be other than a member of the press or an officer. He stated that he recalls there was an automobile at the foot of the ramp coming down from the Commerce Street side and that there was an armored car further up toward Commerce Street. He stated that there was a solid double line of officers and press representatives curving from the exit to the door coming from behind the booking counter to the ramp where OSWALD would be loaded.

O'LEARY stated he was standing almost directly in front of the double doors coming out of the public corridor of the basement and to the east side of the automobile ramp. About the time that OSWALD appeared coming through the door into the ramp and garage area the driver of the automobile backed up suddenly and O'LEARY's attention was diverted to this car since he wondered if the driver would stop the car before he ramed the line of people directly behind him toward the Main street side of the ramp.

At this time O'LEARY became vaguely aware of a short fat man moving in a gliding motion from O'LEARY's right starting possibly 8 - 10 feet from O'LEARY and moving across an area possibly a distance of ten feet directly to OSWALD who was between two police officers. This man who as O'LEARY recalls was wearing a brown hat put his entire body up against LEE HARVEY OSWALD's body as in a shoulder block and O'LEARY heard a muffled "bang." He at first thought it might be a flash bulb exploding since there were many photographers in the basement area. He then saw OSWALD's mouth open in pain or astonishment and saw OSWALD clutch his stomach and double over going down with the man who had shot him on top of him immediately followed by a number of officers to the extent that no single body could be distinguished from another.

From that point on O'LEARY stated he could not see the principals and that the entire mass of men appeared to pick up and move into the basement of the city hall. He never did see the face of the assailant but recalls him as a little old man with shaggy hair. He later learned that this assailant was JACK L. RUBY, but recalls he did not recognize RUBY since he did not see his face.

-169-

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2052-Continued

DL 44-1639

2

Date December 8, 1963

1

O'LEARY advised that at least one officer preceded OSWALD as he came out of the basement door into the ramp and garage area, that there were two officers at his side, several officers behind him and that the way was apparently almost completely lined with officers. He stated that RUBY approached from the side at a diagonal direction to that being traveled by OSWALD and the officers holding him in custody and that their attention seemed to be focused ahead of them and along the line of people that they were still to come to. He stated that this apparently kept them from seeing RUBY before it was too late.

O'LEARY advised that since the shooting of OSWALD by RUBY, TOM HOWARD, attorney for RUBY, has stated that RUBY has stated that RUBY had been to the Western Union Office on the morning of November 24, 1963, and had wired \$25 to a girl in Fort Worth. According to HOWARD, RUBY then returned to the Main Street side of the ramp under the Dallas city hall where two officers were on guard.

These officers were apparently keeping unauthorized individuals from entering the basement area via the ramp. According to HOWARD, Officer R. E. VAUGHN walked to a police car which was about to enter the ramp and then while VAUGHN was busy at the police car, RUBY walked down the ramp unchallenged. He had apparently been standing talking to VAUGHN before the police car appeared.

O'LEARY advised that he recalls that SETH KANTOR of United Press International (UPI), Washington Bureau and TONY RIPLEY of the Detroit "NEWS" were in the basement of the courthouse. He also recalled that BOB JACKSON and JOE BEERS of either the Dallas "News" or the Dallas "Times Herald" made pictures of the shooting and TV cameras from NBC and CBS filmed the murder while NBC was broadcasting it simultaneously. CBS broadcast it at a later time according to O'LEARY.

O'LEARY stated that he does not recall where IKE PAPPAS is from although he represents a radio network. He met him while in Dallas and he was sure PAPPAS was not from Dallas as PAPPAS had rented a car while in Dallas.

JEREMIAH O'LEARY, JR., "Washington Evening Star," Washington, D. C., advised that following the Presidential assassination, he had been assigned to proceed to Dallas, Texas, and cover events concerning same. In this regard, he stated he was present in Dallas on November 24, 1963, and was a witness to the murder of LEE HARVEY OSWALD by night club owner JACK LEON RUBY. He related the following events which took place on the day of the murder, November 24, 1963:

He recalled that on the evening of November 23, 1963, a rumor had circulated among the press that the Dallas Chief of Police might transfer OSWALD from the Dallas Municipal Building to the County Jail on the following day without advising the press. In view of this, he proceeded to the Dallas Municipal Building on the morning of November 24, 1963, arriving at 10 a.m. He entered the building from the Commerce Street side, where a police officer was stationed. He was alone and this officer gave him an inquiring look, so he exhibited his press identification card. The officer gave a cursory look at same and permitted him to enter. He then proceeded directly to the third floor, where the Dallas Police Department Homicide Division is located and where OSWALD had been interrogated subsequent to his arrest. Upon leaving the elevator, he noted an officer stationed at this location who nodded recognition, apparently from the previous day, and permitted him access to the floor. At this time, there were approximately fifteen or twenty press and television representatives in the hallway, none of whom he recognized other than IKE PAPPAS, a representative from a radio station. He had met PAPPAS on the previous day and does not know what radio station he represents, but feels that it is probably a local Dallas station.

At 10:15 a.m., the Chief of Police emerged from his office and announced that OSWALD would be moved to the County Jail very shortly. The Chief commented that he could have moved OSWALD on the previous night, but had decided not to because this would be double-crossing the press. Reporters

on 12/4/63 at Washington, D. C. File # Dallas 44-1639 WFO 44-520  
by Special Agent RICHARD WOOD KAISER:sch:BL Date dictated 12/4/63

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

477