

## TESTIMONY OF CAPT. JAMES MAURICE SOLOMON

The testimony of Capt. James Maurice Solomon was taken at 2 p.m., on March 26, 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 Capt. J. M. Solomon of the Dallas Police Department. Captain Solomon, my name is Leon Hubert. I am a member of the advisory staff of the general counsel of the President's Commission.

Under the provision of Executive Order No. 11130, dated November 29, 1963, and the joint resolution of Congress No. 137, and the rules of procedure adopted by the Commission, in conformance with that Executive order and joint resolution, I have been authorized to take a sworn deposition from you, Captain Solomon.

I state to you 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 as to you, Captain Solomon, the nature of the inquiry today is to determine what facts you know about the death of Oswald and any other pertinent facts you might know about the general inquiry.

Captain Solomon, you have appeared today by virtue of a general request made to Chief Curry by Mr. J. Lee Rankin, who is the general counsel on the staff of the President's Commission.

Under the rules adopted by the Commission, you are entitled to a 3-day written notice prior to the taking of your deposition. But the rules also provide that any witness may waive that 3-day notice if he wishes to do so. Now, I would like to ask you if you are willing to waive the 3-day notice?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. All right, then; would you please raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. SOLOMON. I do.

Mr. HUBERT. Will you please state your full name, Captain?

Mr. SOLOMON. James Maurice Solomon.

Mr. HUBERT. What is your age, Captain?

Mr. SOLOMON. Fifty-four.

Mr. HUBERT. And your residence?

Mr. SOLOMON. 1502 East Ohio.

Mr. HUBERT. What is your present occupation?

Mr. SOLOMON. My occupation at the present time at the police department is reserve coordinator.

Mr. HUBERT. You are a member of the Dallas Police Department?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. How long have you been a member of the department?

Mr. SOLOMON. Thirty years last September.

Mr. HUBERT. Your particular assignment now is to coordinate the reserve affairs?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Of the Dallas Police Department?

Mr. SOLOMON. My offices are at the police academy, and I am used out there in training recruits.

Mr. HUBERT. Were you in that same position during the period November 22 to 24, 1963?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. I would like you to state for the record just how the reserve program of the Dallas Police Department is set up, because I don't think we have it in the record otherwise.

Mr. SOLOMON. Well, I am sure you don't. The reserve operates different in every city that I know, and just to their particular needs.

Now, the reserve organization in Dallas is strictly what the name implies. It is, really a reserve intended to be called upon when there is a catastrophe, some real bad emergency, to augment our manpower.

It is a semimilitary organization in that we call it the reserve platoon. It has three companies commanded by a captain. Each company has three platoons. And each platoon has three squads. There are approximately—it fluctuates just a little bit—but there are approximately 300 men in the organization.

Mr. HUBERT. Who is the reserve captain?

Mr. SOLOMON. There are four reserve captains. Now, the reserve major is Major Tropolis, the major in command. We call him the reserve commander. He is George Tropolis.

Mr. HUBERT. Who are the captains?

Mr. SOLOMON. The captains are J. E. Marks, C. O. Arnett—I believe you talked to him last night—L. C. Crump and O. S. Muller.

Mr. HUBERT. Do these men train at regular intervals?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, sir. They are all required to go through a training program of about 72 hours. They do that 1 night a week. Takes about 8 months to complete that before they are used in any way, before they are given a uniform or anything of that nature.

After they complete this training, they are outfitted with a uniform at their own expense, and from then on the participation that they do is considered observation training.

In other words, there is a program set up whereby they report at least two times a month. We have it set up twice a month, and mandatory that they come every third month. If they don't we drop them.

But each reserve is required to report at least once a month for observation training. He can do this in a squad car, in the jail office, or dispatcher's office, or in any phase of the police operation, really, and he is in uniform, and he works right alongside the regular officer and just assists him in his work in anything he wants him to do if he has a belligerent prisoner, but still that is considered observation training.

Here in the last year or so, we have been using our reserves more maybe like an auxiliary, but there have been times such as a parade or football parade—in other words, it wasn't an extreme emergency, but it was an event that we realized we needed more manpower, and they were anxious and willing and eager to help us, and they were being in uniform and were doing a good job.

You want me to continue?

Mr. HUBERT. Do these men get any pay for this?

Mr. SOLOMON. No. There is no pay at all.

Mr. HUBERT. As a matter of fact, they buy their own pistol and uniform?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes. They buy their own initial uniform. After that their uniforms are maintained with the old uniforms that the regular officers outgrow or something like that.

Mr. HUBERT. I gather from what you have said that you are rather strict as to the training program that these people must observe, otherwise you drop them?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. What about the basic selection of these people? How do you go about that? What are the criteria you use to select them?

Mr. SOLOMON. We have just an application form similar to what anybody would fill out in applying for a job, which is for their background, their schooling, what type of work they have been engaged in, where they have lived, and so forth. Then, of course, I submit that application to our personnel bureau which runs a background check on them, criminal and civil, or any court record they might have that might show their emotional stability or we run a credit check on them for bad debts or something like that, that kind of indication that they are not stable. And traffic arrests.

If it is somebody out of the ordinary, why we are kind of strict along that score. I have these reserve captains that I just mentioned that comprise the reserve staff, and each applicant I get after the personnel board submits their findings, they interview the men, and they have some information to go on there, and whether he is accepted to go to school. After they interview him and ask him questions about trying to feel out if they think he is emotionally suited for that kind of work.

Mr. HUBERT. What, in your opinion, is it that interests a man to want to be in the reserve program?

Mr. SOLOMON. Well, that may be a vocation a little bit. You know, before I got into the program, I thought maybe it was just a group of people that were just trying to—they were just eager, I would say, in other words.

I thought they were, how should I say it, I just felt like they were kind of overeager, or just nosy, so to speak, and they just wanted to see around. But after I got into the program, I was amazed to find the caliber of men. I have only been in 7 years. I went in 1957. It was begun in 1952. And the man that had it then has since made a promotion to inspector, and I was assigned out there.

Mr. HUBERT. In other words, you have satisfied yourself, I gather, that the motivation of these people for getting in the reserves is that they consider it a civic duty?

Mr. SOLOMON. A civic duty, yes, sir; civic minded.

Mr. HUBERT. It is not just that they want the authority of the uniform?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, sir. Of course, we have applicants like that. It is the duty of the staff, in a drawn-out process of training, which is really drawn out 8 months, and long enough to observe them, to eliminate the ones they don't feel are suitable. I nearly always start off with a class of 50 men and I rarely ever graduate over 30—27 to 30.

During that period of time some naturally drop out and some I ask to leave, or just wash out, one way or another, as quickly as I can. After all, it is a public relations program, and if I understand somebody is in there that I know will get us in trouble, I find some excuse for him to leave.

Mr. HUBERT. So, actually, about 60 percent of the people who start ultimately get into the program?

Mr. SOLOMON. That's right.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you watch their conduct very carefully? On duty, of course I know, but off duty too?

Mr. SOLOMON. Well, yes. We have had a few occasions where a few got into some trouble. I guess just drinking or some did get into some bad debts and embarrass us, but we counseled with them. And I have had to let some go. Percentage-wise this hasn't been much greater than in our regular department.

Mr. HUBERT. All right. Now, I want to get to the matter of the interview you had with Harold Holly, who I think is a reserve officer?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Can you state in your own words just what that was all about?

Mr. SOLOMON. Well, Holly was with us a long time. He was in the organization, I have forgotten how many years, but I don't guess that is important.

But frankly, Holly was—he is confused. I am not exactly satisfied that he is sure about what he is saying. His statements were so general, such a general nature, and when I showed him the pictures he was unable to positively identify them.

This man that he did pick out and said that he looked most like the man that was in the basement was W. J. Newman. He was in the basement, but he wasn't out at Parkland Hospital where he told them he saw him, and I just got the impression that Holly was—he just wasn't too reliable a witness.

Mr. HUBERT. What did he say to you? Of course, we will get his testimony, but what do you remember that Holly said to you?

Mr. SOLOMON. Well, he first approached me—you see, I was at the courthouse down in the area when Oswald was shot, so I knew immediately from the previous slaying that one of our big headaches was going to be at the Parkland Hospital, and I rushed on out there to try to set up a little security out there. And Holly showed up out there after awhile, and he made the statement to me that he thinks he knew a man—that is the way he put it, that he thought he saw one of the men out there that was in the basement of the city hall who knew something about that. And I said, "Who was it," and he said, "I couldn't tell you, but I would know him if I saw him."

Mr. HUBERT. Did he say the man was in uniform?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes; he said he saw him out there at Parkland Hospital, so I tried to check.

Mr. HUBERT. This was told you at Parkland Hospital?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes; this afternoon.

Mr. HUBERT. The 24th?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Did he indicate that he thought he was a reserve officer?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. That is why he told it to you, I suppose?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes; right. So I tried to find out who he was talking about, and he went with me and we couldn't find anybody that he thought he saw. And just from the way he talked to me, I just lost confidence in what he was trying to tell me. But I pursued it as far as I could, naturally, and asked him if he could identify some pictures, and I got all the pictures of the men that reported out there, and he picked out this man. And from there on, I didn't question him any further.

Mr. HUBERT. He did pick out the picture of W. J. Newman and he said that was the man?

Mr. SOLOMON. He said he thought it was, it looked most like him. I don't think that it was, but it looked most like him.

Mr. HUBERT. Of course, Newman was subsequently——

Mr. SOLOMON. He was interviewed by Jack Revill.

Mr. HUBERT. Did you ever talk to Newman yourself about the matter?

Mr. SOLOMON. No; I didn't engage him in any conversation about it because I knew they were going to and I just didn't want to get him upset or say anything. I didn't know what he wanted to exactly question him about.

Mr. HUBERT. So that you have not talked to Newman about what he might have seen or thought?

Mr. SOLOMON. No.

Mr. HUBERT. Or what he reported or didn't report?

Mr. SOLOMON. No; that is right.

Mr. HUBERT. Were you present at the time in the basement, at the time Oswald was killed?

Mr. SOLOMON. I was not. I was at the county courthouse.

Mr. HUBERT. You were not in the basement itself?

Mr. SOLOMON. No.

Mr. HUBERT. You don't know anything about what happened?

Mr. SOLOMON. They were anticipating trouble.

Mr. HUBERT. You were in the city hall?

Mr. SOLOMON. No.

Mr. HUBERT. I thought you meant the Dallas Police Building?

Mr. SOLOMON. No, sir; that is the county courthouse.

Mr. HUBERT. I am going to mark for identification a document purporting to be a report of an interview with you, Captain Solomon, made by FBI Agents Hughes and Mabey on December 9, 1963, composed of two pages, and I am identifying it by marking along the right margin line, "Dallas, Texas, March 26, 1964, Exhibit 5106, Deposition of Capt. J. M. Solomon," and I am signing my name on the first page and putting on the second page my initials in the lower right-hand corner. Captain Solomon, have you read this document?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. So that we may recognize that we are talking about the same thing, would you put your signature at the bottom and your initials on the second page.

Mr. SOLOMON. I don't think that this is what I did awhile ago. You want my initials here?

Mr. HUBERT. Just write by the margin and initials by the second page.

Mr. SOLOMON. [Signs and dates.]

Mr. HUBERT. Now, you have read that document, I think, Captain?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Is that a correct report of your interview with the FBI Agents?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Is there anything that is omitted or that you want to change, or modify?

Mr. SOLOMON. No.

Mr. HUBERT. Captain, do you know anything about this matter other than what we have talked about, that you would like to put into the record, sir?

Mr. SOLOMON. No, sir; I do not.

Mr. HUBERT. All right. Now, have you been interviewed by any member of the Commission staff?

Mr. SOLOMON. No.

Mr. HUBERT. As a matter of fact, before the commencement of this deposition, I did not interview you?

Mr. SOLOMON. No.

Mr. HUBERT. I think, Captain, that I mentioned the word "pistol" a moment ago in connection with arming of the reserves?

Mr. SOLOMON. Did you? I didn't recall it.

Mr. HUBERT. You indicated to me that actually these men are not armed with firearms?

Mr. SOLOMON. No; they are not armed. Would you want to make part—this part of the record? This is what I call an information sheet about what the reserve is. A lot of times a citizen calls me and wants to know something about it, and I mail them that.

(Hands to Mr. Hubert.)

Mr. HUBERT. All right. I will accept this. I will mark on the front page, "Dallas, Tex., March 26, 1964, Exhibit 5107." You call that a brochure?

Mr. SOLOMON. I call it an information sheet. We generally refer to it as a poop sheet.

Mr. HUBERT. I am writing on this sheet, "Exhibit 5107, deposition of Capt. J. M. Solomon." I am signing my name, and for identification, if you will sign yours?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes. That just gives a little more detail than what I told you about it, and I had forgotten that. That might be important that they are not armed. That is why we don't let them work in any capacity unless they are in the company of an officer.

Mr. HUBERT. On the day in question, to wit, the 24th of November 1963, the reserve officers were in uniform but of course not armed?

Mr. SOLOMON. That's right.

Mr. HUBERT. I notice that this Exhibit 5107 contains information about the minimum standards that are required?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. For admission and maintaining the status of a reserve officer, is that correct?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mr. HUBERT. Can you state that these minimum standards are in force?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. One other question. Can you state that the reserve officers that were on duty on the 24th did meet these minimum standards?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUBERT. Do you have anything else to say?

Mr. SOLOMON. Well, I don't suppose you want to know that we had some on duty during the Presidential Parade? Is that important?

Mr. HUBERT. It might be in another aspect of the matter, but the one I am inquiring about, it is not. However, I am sure that the information that you have given me, generally speaking, should be made a part of the record, and that is why I have done that. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. SOLOMON. You are so welcome.

Mr. HUBERT. I appreciate your coming down.

Mr. SOLOMON. All right. Thank you very much, sir.

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#### TESTIMONY OF M. W. STEVENSON

The testimony of M. W. Stevenson was taken at 7 p.m., on March 23, 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.