

Hearings Before the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy

TESTIMONY OF L. C. GRAVES

The testimony of L. C. Graves was taken at 10:30 a.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. Burt W. Griffin, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I am a member of the advisory staff of the General Counsel of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. The Commission has been given authority under a congressional resolution to investigate the facts surrounding the death of President Kennedy and the killing of Lee Harvey Oswald, and, other related events.

We are interested particularly, in calling you, in the events that surrounded the death of Lee Harvey Oswald. We are also interested in everything that you may know and so, you can consider relevant any question having to do with the complete scope of the investigation. Now, you have the right to receive, by mail, the notice 3 days in advance before the taking your testimony, and I want to ask you at this time whether you waive that notice?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; I waive that notice.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, you also have a right to be present here with an attorney, and, of course, you are not represented by counsel. If you would like the opportunity to get an attorney, we'll afford you that chance.

Mr. GRAVES. No; I don't think that is necessary.

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

Mr. GRAVES. My name is L. C. Graves [spelling] G-r-a-v-e-s.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where do you live, Mr. Graves?

Mr. GRAVES. I live at 7811 Maxwell Avenue, Dallas, Tex.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And where are you employed?

Mr. GRAVES. I am employed with the Dallas Police Department, as a detective in the homicide and robbery bureau.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long have you been with the Dallas Police Department?

Mr. GRAVES. 14 years, the 31st day of October last.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where were you born?

Mr. GRAVES. October 8, 1918, at Camp County.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Texas?

Mr. GRAVES. Texas.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Have you been interviewed by me previous to this deposition which we are now taking?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Would you state for the record when it was that you and I talked?

Mr. GRAVES. Oh, approximately 30 minutes ago.

Mr. GRIFFIN. We have been talking almost continuously since that?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. All right, now, I will indicate for the record that we have been discussing the—your experiences from the time President Kennedy was shot until you arrived for work on Sunday morning, November 24, and I believe you

told me while I was interviewing you that on Sunday morning you drove to work, and that you parked your car somewhere along the side of the police department building, and it is your recollection that you walked from the Commerce Street side through the basement hall that leads to the records room?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, I asked you in the interview whether you remember just—remembered just as you walked down from the Commerce Street—down the steps to the door which leads into the building, whether as you got inside the building you noticed the placement of TV cables in relationship to the engine-room, or that door that goes back down into the subbasement. Do you have any recollection of how the TV cables were spread out there?

Mr. GRAVES. Vaguely. I think the cables did go through that door. I couldn't be sure.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Which door are you talking about?

Mr. GRAVES. Through the engineroom door.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When you got inside the building, where did you go?

Mr. GRAVES. I went to the homicide and robbery bureau on the third floor, room 317.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When you got up into the hallway on the third floor, can you describe the condition of the hallway?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, of course, it was cluttered up with camera equipment and cables and newspeople, cameramen.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember when you arrived there on the third floor, whether the TV cameras were manned?

Mr. GRAVES. Reasonably sure they were. There were men standing around with earphones on and the light.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, do you recall about what time it was that you got up there to the third floor?

Mr. GRAVES. Approximately 8 o'clock, I think or——

Mr. GRIFFIN. That is in the morning?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What did you do when you got to the homicide bureau?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, I went in, of course, and started answering the telephones and talking to people that were calling about various things.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was anybody else there when you arrived?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; just about everyone, I think, that worked in the homicide bureau were there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Who would that be?

Mr. GRAVES. Oh, of course, my partner, L. D. Montgomery——

Mr. GRIFFIN. Montgomery.

Mr. GRAVES. E. R. Beck, C. N. Dhority, J. R. Leavelle, C. W. Brown, Lieutenant Wells, those are the ones that I remember right now at the moment.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember if Captain Fritz was there?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, yes; he was there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember whether or not, Lee Oswald was there?

Mr. GRAVES. He wasn't there when I first got there in the room.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When you got into the room, do you remember talking with anybody?

Mr. GRAVES. I don't remember who I talked with first, when I got there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember having any conversation with anyone regardless of who it might have been, after you got up there, shortly after you arrived?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, the only conversation I recall actually, is when we were told to bring him down, Oswald down to the captain's office. Now, the rest was routine stuff.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long after you arrived would be your best estimate that you were told to bring Oswald down to the captain's office.

Mr. GRAVES. Well, let's see, we would have a thing to show the exact time that I signed him out. At somewhere shortly before 10 o'clock, which would be something over an hour, better part of 2 hours——

Mr. GRIFFIN. In this period from approximately 8 o'clock until shortly before 10, did you have any conversations about the movement of Lee Oswald from the city jail to the county jail?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, the captain told us that he would be transferred in a car.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Captain Fritz told you that?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; and at first he wanted to talk to him some more, so, we brought him down to the office so he could be interviewed.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did Captain Fritz tell you what kind of a car he was going to be transferred in?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; we understood it was going to be a regular police car like we use, plain cars.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long before you got Oswald down did you get this information?

Mr. GRAVES. Oh, it couldn't have been but a few minutes, at least.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where were you told this?

Mr. GRAVES. In the hallway, or office there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you recall now whether you were in that homicide office or in the hallway?

Mr. GRAVES. I believe I was in the hallway when I heard it.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How many other officers were standing around at that time?

Mr. GRAVES. Oh, I don't remember really. Probably two or three or four.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How close was Captain Fritz to you when you heard this?

Mr. GRAVES. As close as you and I are.

Mr. GRIFFIN. We have a table separating us.

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. 6-foot, about a 6-foot table, isn't it? Was he talking only to you, or talking to the other officers?

Mr. GRAVES. Generally to all of us.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, at this time, were there newspaper people in the area?

Mr. GRAVES. I don't believe. At the moment, I don't believe any newsmen were in there at the time.

Mr. GRIFFIN. This is not in the hallway?

Mr. GRAVES. No, I mean this little hallway in our bureau—comes from the front entrance. You know, you have been there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes, I have.

Mr. GRAVES. See, there is a little hallway that comes around—

Mr. GRIFFIN. You are talking about the hallway that, as you open the door off the third floor hallway?

Mr. GRAVES. No, I am talking about the hallway between the little office and captain's office.

Mr. GRIFFIN. For the record, about how far were you from the third floor hallway when this conversation took place?

Mr. GRAVES. 25 feet, approximately.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And do you remember the other officers who were standing around at the time?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, Leavelle and Montgomery for sure. I don't know who else right now. Beck—Dhority and Beck both could have been in there. I am not sure about that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long did this conversation with Captain Fritz last?

Mr. GRAVES. Just long enough to say that—"We are going to get him down and talk to him, and get the car ready in the basement." Told Dhority and Brown what to do about the cars, also Beck, and so, we went up and got him and brought him down.

Mr. GRIFFIN. At the time that you were instructed to go up and bring down Oswald, were Dhority and Brown given instructions by Fritz about the automobiles?

Mr. GRAVES. I'm going to have to say that I am not sure whether it was at that moment, or after we brought him down, and I kind of believe that it was then that they got the cars ready and put them in the basement, and that at the last minute just before we took him down, we were instructed to move that car up there to the entrance exit of the jail office, and I am pretty sure that that is the way that went.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Well, now, just directing your attention to the time that you were instructed to go up and bring Oswald down for interrogation, what other conversation do you remember taking place with Fritz?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, that was all that was said to me at that time.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Who went up with you?

Mr. GRAVES. Leavelle and Dhority.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And did you talk with Lee Oswald on your way down?

Mr. GRAVES. No, didn't say anything to him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What did you do after you brought Oswald down to the homicide bureau?

Mr. GRAVES. Brought him in the office with Captain Fritz and the other people that were in there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, what did you do when you——

Mr. GRAVES. I went back outside and started answering phones, or doing whatever it was to be done for a while, but I didn't go back in the office until just before we were ready to move him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. While you were out there answering telephones and so forth, did you hear any more about the movement of Oswald to the county jail?

Mr. GRAVES. Not while I was outside, no.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you see Chief Curry come in?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did he say anything that you heard about the movement of Oswald?

Mr. GRAVES. Not where I could hear him. He went in the office and this—presumably discussed something with Captain Fritz. I believe he made a number of trips there during the time that he was being interviewed.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were there any rumors circulating in the homicide bureau about how Oswald would be transferred?

Mr. GRAVES. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. GRIFFIN. All right. Well, then, when was the next time that you got any information about moving Lee Oswald?

Mr. GRAVES. Immediately after, just a few minutes before the interview was completed, I went in the office, and we were instructed that we were to take him down, and he would be taken in the car.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Who was in the office when you walked in?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, Mr. Sorrels and Mr. Holmes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Sorrels is from the Secret Service?

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Holmes is from the Postal Department—I believe it is the Postal Department, and I can't think of the other man's name now.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Man from the FBI?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; I have that in the little report that I wrote, but I can't think of his name right now. It is a simple name, too, but I can't think of it.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was it Hall?

Mr. GRAVES. Who?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Hall?

Mr. GRAVES. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Well, that is all right. We can get that.

Mr. GRAVES. It wasn't him. Oh, let's see——

Mr. GRIFFIN. Any other police officers in the office?

Mr. GRAVES. Let's see. Leavelle. I believe Montgomery was in there, too.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, what was said when you came in?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, I walked in and asked—last thing I heard was—Oswald say was that—"Well, people will soon forget that the President was shot." And then—Chief Curry, incidentally, was in there at that time, too, and he was around over behind the desk by Captain Fritz. Between he and Mr. Sorrels, and something was discussed about an armored car, but they decided that they would send an armored car on as a decoy, because it couldn't get down into the basement.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You had heard a conversation about that?

Mr. GRAVES. I heard that discussed just briefly, the armored car was there, but——

Mr. GRIFFIN. Well, did you hear the discussion about a decoy?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, Captain Fritz turned back to me and Leavelle, told us that the armored car would go ahead, and that we would leave out in the regular

car; so, he told Leavelle to handcuff himself to Oswald. Can I tell you something off the record?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Sure.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. GRIFFIN. All right.

Mr. GRAVES. I expect it doesn't matter. I thought about it later. It doesn't mean anything, I don't suppose, unless it has some sentimental value to him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you hear Oswald say anything, or any other conversation with Oswald before you took him down?

Mr. GRAVES. I heard some other conversation, but I am vague on what it was. Discussion between he and—I wish I could remember that man's name. I want to say, "O'Malley." Seems like it was an Irish name. He was asking him something about his stay in Russia and some of his activities down in Mexico and—but just what his answer was, I am vague on it. He discussed something with him, and I wasn't paying too much attention at the time. Some answers that he gave.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Tell us what happened when Oswald went to get something?

Mr. GRAVES. We asked him if he would like to put on something. He just had on this white T-shirt, see, and asked him if he would like to put on something. So, when we got these clothes off the rack and started to give him a light-colored jacket or shirt, and said, "If it is all the same to you"—said, "I'd rather wear that black sweater."

Mr. GRIFFIN. Whose black sweater was that?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, his, presumably. So, we let him put it on.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where were the clothes?

Mr. GRAVES. They were in the captain's office back there in the back, and brought them in there so he could pick out something to wear.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were they all his?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes, yes; they were. Then——

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you help him put his——

Mr. GRAVES. I assisted him in putting this on. Then, we, of course, started on out with him. Went on to the elevator, down the hall to what they call the jail office elevator.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were you given any instructions as to how you should guard him?

Mr. GRAVES. As I said, I was—told to hold to the arm and walk close to him and Montgomery was to walk behind us and Captain Fritz, and Lieutenant Swain in front of us and that is the way we started out to the elevator, and out of the elevator door over to the jail office.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was there any discussion about staying close to Oswald?

Mr. GRAVES. We were instructed to stay close to him; yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. All right, now, was there any discussion about protecting Oswald from other people who'd like to get at him?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, to come down and tell us to do that would be elementary, actually, because, I mean, we just know to do that, and our captain knows that we know to do that. So, actually, we weren't specifically told, "Now, you just watch this man and don't let anybody touch him." Or anything like that. We were told that the way would be open and nobody would be interfering with us. Wouldn't be anybody there. All we would have to do was walk to the car.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Was there any fear that somebody might come right up in front of him and do something to him?

Mr. GRAVES. We didn't have any fear of that because as I said, that—we were told that the security was so that no one would be there but newsmen and officers.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, prior to taking Oswald down to the basement, had you learned anything about the threatening telephone calls which the police department had received?

Mr. GRAVES. I had not. At that time I didn't know that there had been any threatening calls.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you subsequently learn?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; learned later that the FBI had a call to that effect, but I learned that our office had had similar calls, too.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What route did you follow when you left Captain Fritz' office with Oswald?

Mr. GRAVES. Of course, went out our door and turned left, which would be—south.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Went into the third floor hallway?

Mr. GRAVES. Third floor hallway; yes, sir; and went to a solid door which leads us into the jail elevator.

Mr. GRIFFIN. As you walked out, were there news people out in the hallway?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes, lots of them.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Were there TV cameras up in the hallway?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; all kinds of cameras.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, how long a period of time lapsed from the time you stopped answering the telephone calls until you got out on the third floor hallway with Oswald?

Mr. GRAVES. Ten or 15 minutes, I guess, approximately.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, when you stopped answering the telephone calls to go into Captain Fritz' office, were you aware that you were going in there for the purpose of getting ready to move Oswald out?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did you become aware of that?

Mr. GRAVES. We were told that we were going to move him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Who told you that?

Mr. GRAVES. Captain Fritz.

Mr. GRIFFIN. He told you?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; I don't know whether he walked out and told me. You know, in the process, the door was opened and he talked to some of us at the door and so forth.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, prior to the time that you actually went out there in the hallway with Oswald, did you have any information as to whether the people who were members of the press were aware that Oswald was about to be brought out?

Mr. GRAVES. I—it was my understanding they knew that he was to be transferred at 10 o'clock.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Well, I mean—

Mr. GRAVES. Well, no, no; we—if you mean if we—told them when we were leaving with him, we didn't do that. We just walked out with him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. But what about a sharp newsman who was keeping his eyes and ears open? Could he see through the door? Could he see the activity?

Mr. GRAVES. Could he see the preparation—

Mr. GRIFFIN. For bringing out—

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Could one see Oswald putting on his sweater, for example?

Mr. GRAVES. Maybe not that, but he could have seen us pass it over to him. I believe those blinds were open there on—coming out to the secretary's office there. I believe they were. I'm not sure about that, but if they were open they could have seen from the front door standing at the hallway at an angle. They could have seen that sweater or clothes changing hands. I don't believe where Oswald was standing he could see him from that angle, but I—like I said, a good, sharp newsman knowing the activity, he could see and naturally know that something was fixing to happen.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When you arrived at the elevators on the third floor, was the elevator there waiting for you?

Mr. GRAVES. I think it was waiting right there for us.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, which elevator did you come down in?

Mr. GRAVES. It is called the inside jail elevator, which is used only for the transfer of prisoners from one floor to the other and basement.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And who went into the elevator with you?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, it was Leavelle, Montgomery, Swain, and Captain Fritz and myself and, of course, Oswald.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where was Chief Curry at that time?

Mr. GRAVES. I don't know. He left just before we did and I don't know where he went.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long would you estimate Chief Curry left before you people walked out of the homicide bureau with Oswald?

Mr. GRAVES. You know, I couldn't tell you. I—I—actually, the chief could have been standing in there somewhere and I wouldn't know it—because when we were given the final go to get him ready or get his sweater on him, I didn't pay any attention to who else was in there or what happened. They told me to get him ready and walked out with him. He could have left a few minutes ahead of us; I don't know, it would be a guess, because I really don't know.

Mr. GRIFFIN. All right. Now, what happened when you got to the basement?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, we got down to the basement. We hesitated on the elevator until Captain Fritz and Lieutenant Swain stepped out. Then we followed them around the outside exit door into the hallway which leads to the ramp and then hesitated there a little bit with Oswald so they could check out there and see that everything was all right, and when we got the go ahead sign that everything was all right we walked out with him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And how many steps did you take before something happened?

Mr. GRAVES. You mean after we walked out in the hallway?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes.

Mr. GRAVES. It is approximately 15 feet from where I was to the jail house door where we came out into the hallway, roughly 15 feet.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you see Jack Ruby move out of the crowd?

Mr. GRAVES. No; I didn't see Jack Ruby move out of the crowd.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When was the first time that you noticed Jack Ruby?

Mr. GRAVES. I estimated before I saw the film it was a split second before he pulled that trigger and actually, he was taking a step and coming down like so [indicating]. I caught him out of the corner of my eye and I thought that I started reaching for him at that moment, which the film indicates that I did, which happened quickly, as you know.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes.

Mr. GRAVES. Just a matter of simultaneous movement. You just move when you see something like that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you actually see the gun before you heard it—heard the shots fired?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; in fact, that is the first thing I saw coming that way, and I just started after it, I guess, automatically, nothing else to do, that I could see.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you see how the newsmen were spread out as you walked out of that hallway?

Mr. GRAVES. I saw how they weren't spread out. I was under the impression there wouldn't be any news media inside that rampway, that they would be behind that area over there, but they were in the way.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did you get that impression?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, Chief Curry told Captain Fritz that the security was taken care of, that there wouldn't be nobody in that ramp. Anyway, that cameras would be over behind that rail of that ramp. So, what we expected to find was our officers along the side there, but we found newsmen inside that ramp, in fact, in the way of that car. Now, we—Captain Fritz sent Dhority and Brown and Beck on down to the basement in plenty of time to get that car up there for us, and when they got down there and run into mass confusion of pressmen, we almost backed over some of them to get up there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, after Fritz sent Dhority and Brown down, did they send word back up to Fritz' office that everything was ready in the basement?

Mr. GRAVES. Somebody did. I believe Baker called—Lieutenant Baker called down from our office to check with the jail downstairs and see that everything was ready. Somebody gave them the word. I don't know whether it was Lieutenant Wiggins or who told them that it was all right. Everything was in order.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You say you were quite surprised when you saw these news people?

Mr. GRAVES. I was surprised that they were rubbing my elbow. You know,

if you saw that film, you saw one of them with a mike in his hand. He actually rubbed my elbow. We were in a slight turn when this thing happened, and my attention had been called to that car door, and this joker was standing there with a microphone in his hand, and others that—I don't know if they were news-men—they weren't officers—had cameras around their necks and everything.

Mr. GRIFFIN. As you looked up at that line of news people, from your left over to the TV cameras, how many lines deep is it your recollection that they were?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, I would say two or three deep until they crossed that ramp and went down the side. Might not have been more than one deep there. Might not have been much room, because the car was trying to come in there. Might have been two deep. I know there was a line of men there, and how deep I don't know. I saw through the corner of my eye a movement over there of men.

Mr. GRIFFIN. As you walked out, did you notice any police officers that you recognized?

Mr. GRAVES. Oh, yes; I recognized officers standing around the walls there.

Mr. GRIFFIN. As you walked out, did you see Officer Harrison?

Mr. GRAVES. No; I didn't see him. Matter of fact, I never did see him until it was all over. You are talking about "Blackie"?

Mr. GRIFFIN. "Blackie" Harrison; W. J. Harrison.

Mr. GRAVES. I didn't see him until it was all over.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When you saw Jack come forward with the gun in his hand, did you hear anybody say anything?

Mr. GRAVES. I heard noise. There was a racing of a motor and noises, talking going on. As I say, my attention had been directed to that car, and we had already turned, looked in that direction and something could have been said, but as I said, I heard noises but just exactly what was said I wasn't able to determine.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What do you remember doing when Jack came forward with the gun?

Mr. GRAVES. I remember going after the gun. Just the moment I saw him, that is what I actually did, was go for the gun.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And did you wrestle with him? With Jack?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Will you tell us what you remember Jack Ruby doing from the time you saw him and while you wrestled with him and so forth?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, I grabbed his arm by the wrist with my left hand, and grabbed right over the gun with my right hand simultaneously.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You grabbed the arm holding the gun?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; and jerked it down and across my leg and turned my back to him, and, of course, he was trying to pull back, and was squeezing on that trigger like so [indicating].

I had his wrist here [indicating], and I could feel it, and I remember saying, "turn it loose. Turn it loose." You know, like that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, you are making a motion like you are twisting his arm?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; I was. See, I had it like this, and I had got that arm and then twisted that gun like that [indicating], right out of his hand, see.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Let me indicate for the record that you have shown that you twisted his arm 180°.

Mr. GRAVES. Until he released it.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Until he released the gun?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long was it from the time you released—grabbed his arm until he released the gun?

Mr. GRAVES. Just a matter of seconds.

Mr. GRIFFIN. It was not a long struggle?

Mr. GRAVES. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Fairly easy to wrestle the gun away?

Mr. GRAVES. Put it this way. It wasn't easy because he had a grip on the gun, but the way I took it, he had to turn it loose. I had his arm—kind of hard to explain—take your arm and bend it over my leg like that and twist down on it like that [indicating]. You have got to give.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You are bending the arm over your leg?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, did Jack say anything?

Mr. GRAVES. He didn't say anything to me. I understand that he said something, that is, some things to the officer that took him in. I—

Mr. GRIFFIN. I mean, as you were struggling with him?

Mr. GRAVES. No; not to me. I had his arm over and my back to him and, of course, officers were covering him up, and when I got the gun loose from him, of course, they snatched him away from me, and by the time I got straightened up to check that gun and see if the hammer was back or not, they had already taken him into the jail office.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What did you do there? You were standing there or lying?

Mr. GRAVES. I was standing. I never did go down.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Standing with the gun in your hand, what did you do at that point?

Mr. GRAVES. Put the gun in my pocket and went on inside the jail office.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When you arrived inside the jail office, where was Ruby?

Mr. GRAVES. Ruby was, I believe, to my right; just to my right, to the right of the jail office door. Of course, there were men around there and Oswald was back—

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long did you remain there?

Mr. GRAVES. I didn't remain with Ruby at all. Just kind of hesitated and looked over and went on. I believe Montgomery asked me if I got the gun and I said, "Yes," and kept on.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Where did you walk?

Mr. GRAVES. Walked back to where Oswald was.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you hear him say anything?

Mr. GRAVES. I didn't hear him say anything.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What did you do when you got back to where Oswald was?

Mr. GRAVES. Stood there and watched the doctor work with him until the ambulance came.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Then what did you do?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, they put him in the ambulance and I got in the ambulance with him and went to Parkland Hospital and got off there and took him right into emergency and worked with him a few minutes. And got him prepared for the operating room, and, so, we caught the elevator with him and with the doctors and nurses and went on up to the second floor, and I changed into one of those scrub uniforms and crepe-soled shoes and went over to the door of the operating room, where I stayed until such time as he was pronounced dead.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Outside of the operating room?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. As you were standing outside of the operating room, did you hear discussion about how Ruby got into the building?

Mr. GRAVES. No; I didn't—an FBI man came up there a little later and stood with me.

Mr. GRIFFIN. To go back just a minute, you have already told me this before in an earlier interview, but I want to make this clear for the record. You knew Ruby before this occasion when you saw him shoot Oswald?

Mr. GRAVES. I will tell you how I knew Ruby. He opened a joint, a dancehall down on South Ervay called the Silver Spur something like 10 years ago, approximately. That is where I first knew Jack Ruby existed. Since that time I have just known about Jack Ruby—

Mr. GRIFFIN. How did you know him down there?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, as a joint operator, you know, when you work in a uniform that is part of the business, to know who runs places.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What bureau were you in at that time?

Mr. GRAVES. I was in the radio patrol bureau at that time.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I see.

Mr. GRAVES. And later I learned that he opened a place out on Oak Lawn called The Vegas Club.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you see Ruby in the police department over the years before that?

Mr. GRAVES. I have never in my entire time at that police station seen Jack Ruby in the police station. Now, it is possible Jack was down there. I know he has been in jail, but to say that he, like some people do hang around the police station, I have never seen him do that, and I have worked all hours. That still doesn't mean that he couldn't have been coming in there. However, with someone that worked opposite hours to me—and I wouldn't see him, but during the time that I have been there I have never seen him hanging around the police station. You know, speculation is, is that he is a friend of the police and so forth. He might have done some policeman some favor, I don't know that to be true, so, it would be speculating on my part to say that he was.

Mr. GRIFFIN. How long did you remain at Parkland Hospital?

Mr. GRAVES. Oh, I'd hate to say this for the record, not seeing my report. Until he died. This in the basement happened about 11:10, or 11:19, and we reached Parkland a few minutes after. He was pronounced dead at 1 something.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I don't really care about the exact time. We are going to get the time records and check it out there but what I am trying to establish is when you learned that he was dead, what did you do?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, of course, we made arrangements to get the pathologist up there and maintaining guards over him, even during the time he was in the morgue. We discussed that, and then Clardy and Brown were charged with that responsibility, and I changed clothes and me and Leavelle, I believe me and Leavelle came back to city hall with Officer Burgess.

Mr. GRIFFIN. About what time would you say he got back to the city hall?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, again, I wouldn't want to say definitely. I think somewhere around 2:30 or 3:45, somewhere in that vicinity.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Up to the time that you got back to city hall, had you heard anything about how Ruby might have gotten into the basement?

Mr. GRAVES. No; I hadn't, sure hadn't. Of course, everyone was wondering at that point how it happened and how he got in there, but I hadn't heard anything at that point. Hadn't seen or been around anybody except those that I went out there with and they didn't know any more than I did.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When you got back to the police department, what did you do?

Mr. GRAVES. I went back to the office, of course.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Homicide bureau?

Mr. GRAVES. Homicide bureau.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Who was there at the time?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, frankly, I don't remember who all were in the office. I know Jack Ruby was in Captain Fritz' office talking with him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Who else was in Captain Fritz' office at the time?

Mr. GRAVES. I don't know, frankly. That window blind was open there and I could see Jack Ruby, and I could see Captain Fritz and some other people were in there, but just who, I don't know.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, was Jack Ruby fully clothed at the time?

Mr. GRAVES. I believe they had already put some white clothes on him, jail clothes, taken his suit off of him.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, did you go into Captain Fritz' office?

Mr. GRAVES. No; I didn't. I didn't see Jack Ruby anymore until they transferred him to the county.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you talk to any police officer that day about how Ruby got into the jail?

Mr. GRAVES. As I say, I just heard rumors going around, and at this point I don't really remember who related it to me, but—there was rumors that he—

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you remember as you got back there what the first rumor was that you heard circulating?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes; that he slipped in the basement by a squad car when they drove out the north ramp.

Mr. GRIFFIN. You heard this when you got back to the—

Mr. GRAVES. Sometime after I got back. Just exactly when, I don't know, but that got around shortly after. I could have been 2 or 3 hours later, I don't know.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What was the next rumor that you heard?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, I don't know. I heard that Chief Batchelor and a couple

of the detectives had walked down the ramp and Ruby walked in with them, and I heard that he probably had a pass.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And——

Mr. GRAVES. Press pass, and he used that on one of the officers at the door to get in. You can hear everything.

Mr. GRIFFIN. When did you first hear the rumor that he had walked down the Main Street ramp?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, I can't remember. Just some time that day after we got back there from the hospital.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you hear it before or after the other rumors that you are relating?

Mr. GRAVES. That was the first one that I heard, really.

Mr. GRIFFIN. That he walked down the Main Street ramp?

Mr. GRAVES. That he walked down the ramp when that squad car drove out.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And people came out of Captain Fritz' office, who had been talking with Ruby, did you hear anything coming out of Captain Fritz' office as to how Ruby got in?

Mr. GRAVES. No; sure didn't.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you ever learn from any of the detectives who had been talking to Ruby in Captain Fritz' office how Ruby got into the jail basement?

Mr. GRAVES. Well, let's see. I don't know who it was, that told me how he (Ruby) got in. Now, Captain Fritz later told us that he asked Ruby how he got in there and he told him, I believe it was, at that time that he would rather not discuss that.

Mr. GRIFFIN. All right. And did Captain Fritz tell you this shortly after this interview that Fritz was having with Ruby?

Mr. GRAVES. It was some time after the interview. And I don't remember exactly when, but it was some time after he had talked with him. Maybe the second time, I don't know, but it was some time after he had told him, and they told——

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, at the time that Ruby—at the time that you learned from Fritz that Ruby didn't want to talk about how he got in this basement, had you already heard that Ruby came down the ramp?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Had you already heard the other rumors which you have related?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you later hear from Captain Fritz, or any other police officer that he had talked with Ruby and Ruby had said something about how he got in——

Mr. GRAVES. I didn't hear that from Captain Fritz that I know of.

Mr. GRIFFIN. But, from any other police officer?

Mr. GRAVES. Something to the effect that he told somebody how he got in there, but I never did find out the straight of that. They had started a full scale investigation in terms of what happened in the basement at that time. Nobody was telling anybody anything so I just dropped it.

Mr. GRIFFIN. About what time did they——

Mr. GRAVES. I don't know exactly when they started that, but, they started trying to find out what happened, and I am sure, immediately.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you ever talk with Officer Dean, as far as you can remember?

Mr. GRAVES. I didn't discuss it with Officer Dean at all.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you ever talk with Officer McMillon?

Mr. GRAVES. No.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Or Officer Clardy?

Mr. GRAVES. Can we go off the record?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. GRIFFIN. On the record for this. Is there anything that we haven't covered in connection with the murder of Lee Oswald, including how Ruby got into the basement, or things that might shed some light upon Ruby's motive or possible associates that he might have had that you could tell the Commission?

Mr. GRAVES. No, and I wish that there was. Listen, as I said, we have heard a lot of things but we have never been able to prove anything, so, again, what I have heard is just speculation, and just talk. I have heard that he was connected with any number of people. Trying to prove that—telling us—but there is nothing concrete in terms of evidence to prove that he was connected with them in any way, so far as I know. Somebody may know something that I don't know.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Do you know anything of your own knowledge that you think might bear light one way or the other?

Mr. GRAVES. No, I don't; again, like I say, I wish that there was something, but, of course, I am sure that everybody is like me and listen to everybody and everything and try to make sense out of this thing to the best of their ability by checking everything.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I'm going to mark for identification here—we are going to call this, "Dallas, Tex., Detective Graves, March 24, 1964. Exhibit No. 5003." And I'm going to mark these pages 5003-A and 5003-B and 5003-C. Now, these are copies of FBI reports which purport to be interviews that were had by the FBI agents, with you. Exhibit 5003-A is a report of an interview on November 24, taken by Special Agent Bookhout and Agent Rabidoux. Do you remember approximately when these gentlemen talked with you?

Mr. GRAVES. To the best of my recollection, it was in the evening part of the day, but just exactly when, I don't know.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Now, Exhibit 5003-B, and Exhibit 5003-C, consists of one interview with you by Special Agent Bookhout, Jim Bookhout.

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFIN. And that was dated on November 24. Do you remember approximately what time of day that was?

Mr. GRAVES. That was pretty soon after this thing happened, after I got back from the hospital, so, you can say roughly, I guess, around 3 o'clock, 3 or 4 o'clock. That is just—that is an approximate time. He was the first one I talked to. There was something in there that I want to call your attention to, though.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Let me hand these to you and let you examine Exhibits 5003-A, 5003-B and C, and tell us if there is anything in there that you would want to amplify or correct or change in any manner?

Mr. GRAVES. Let me see. I will have to find it now.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Just take your time.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. GRAVES. This right here says, "Captain Fritz was in the lead and was standing at the edge of the ramp waiting to get into the front seat of the car," actually, he was at the rear of that car door, fixing to open it, if he didn't already have it open.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What exhibit number are you referring to, sir?

Mr. GRAVES. 5003-B. No; that's right here. "Graves and Leavelle stopped momentarily for the car to back up," that is a bad choice of phrasing in that situation. We, actually can't say that we were stopped, we were still in motion when this thing happened. It was a momentary glance to the right and a slight turn in that direction, but we were still in motion.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Did you make this correction as a result of having viewed the movies, or something that you remember independently of the movies?

Mr. GRAVES. I remembered that later. Of course, I saw it also on the movies later which verified it, but after I had gotten this thing and read it over then, I realized that we actually hadn't stopped.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I recall that I have neglected to administer an oath to you in the course of this deposition, Mr. Graves. I wonder if you would raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear that everything that you have said here today is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Mr. GRAVES. I do.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Is there anything more that you have to tell us?

Mr. GRAVES. I can't think of anything at this time. Except for those little things, I believe those are basically true and correct.

Mr. GRIFFIN. We certainly appreciate your coming here today.