

checking him for any possible connection with the case because of his record as one who had associated with subversives. As Oswald himself came out of the room where he had been questioned about an hour ago, he leaned into ABC microphones and said he would like to contact a Mr. Abt of New York City to serve as his attorney. We are not certain who Mr. Abt is. We do know, however, that a Mr. John Abt was the official lawyer for the Communist Party and for Communist officials appearing before Congressional committees in the 1950's. Again I emphasize we are not certain whether this is the man Oswald wants to contact to serve as his attorney. Oswald himself, as far as we know, is at this moment in his jail cell in the Dallas city jail one floor above us. He will be transferred later, we expect sometime later today, to the Dallas county jail.

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2162--Continued

WFAA-TV reel HKT 16
Sunday, November 24, 1963

INTERVIEW OF DETECTIVE JAMES R. LEAVELLE, DALLAS
POLICE DEPARTMENT, BY BILL LORD, WFAA-TV

LORD. This is Detective Jim Leavelle, who was this morning handcuffed to Oswald and was bringing him out to the car to be transferred to the county jail. Could you tell us what happened?

LEAVELLE. We were proceeding with the prisoner, as scheduled, from the jail office out to the ramp where the automobile was waiting. And as we reached the area where the car was parked, the man from the crowd emerged and there was a hundred or more newspapermen and cameramen in the area and it was almost a solid wall of flesh in front of us and to our left composed of the news media. When the-- when we came through the door with Oswald they began taking their pictures, and in the ensuing time that they were snapping pictures and talking I saw this man come from the crowd, and at the time he emerged from this crowd of people he was not more than six or seven feet from me. And I dare say that had I known that he was going to be there, the swiftness with which it happened, I doubt if anyone could have prevented it.

LORD. Did you see the gun in his hand as he came--

LEAVELLE. I saw the gun in his hand as he emerged from the crowd. But being such a short distance from me, I had no time to say anything. I did jerk Oswald to try to protect him behind me.

LORD. You were handcuffed to him?

LEAVELLE. I was handcuffed to him and also had hold of the waistband of his trousers. I tried to jerk him behind me, but he had--

and I reached up and caught ahold of Jack Ruby's shoulder, left shoulder, and shoved back on it, at the same time pulling on Oswald, but he had the--had this .38 snub-nosed pistol and he--all he had to do was pull the trigger--it was a double-action gun--and therefore it only took--the whole episode only took a matter of a second to take place.

LORD. Now, when Oswald fell to the ground, was he unconscious at that point?

LEAVELLE. I would say if he was not, he was near, nearly so. Just as soon as the--my partner on the other side, Mr. Graves, grabbed Jack's hand with the gun in such a manner that he couldn't fire it any more.

LORD. Did he try to fire it?

LEAVELLE. Yes, he was still, with his left hand--he had the gun in his right hand and he was trying to pull it around, and I could tell that he was still trying to snap the pistol. But Mr. Graves had it in such a manner that he couldn't snap it, couldn't fire it any further--any more.

LORD. Did you lend aid to the victim on the ground?

LEAVELLE. Yes, I immediately picked him up then, with another officer--I don't remember who that was--and carried him back inside the jail office to get him away from the area. And I talked, I tried to talk, to him and ask him if he could hear me and if he understood. He never did answer me and his eyes were partially closed. However, I know he never regained consciousness.

LORD. How has this affected morale, the spirit of the police force?

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2163--Continued

LEAVELLE. Well, I think that I can probably speak for all the officers here. I heard many of them comment on it, and I think that they all feel very deeply about it. They regret the incident happening; they regret the thing--the shooting--that occurred of the President on Friday; and certainly this hasn't helped their feelings any at all. The--Mr. Ruby didn't--didn't better our cause any by shooting Oswald.

LORD. Did you recognize him when he came through?

LEAVELLE. Yes. I have known Jack Ruby for a number of years and I recognized him just as soon as he emerged from the crowd.

LORD. But if, even if you know he was coming, you say you didn't have the time to react quickly?

LEAVELLE. He was so close from the human wall of flesh and of reporters there that it would have been impossible to have stopped him.

LORD. Thank you very much.

The story of what happened when Lee Harvey Oswald was killed this morning. This is Bill Lord, reporting from the Dallas police station.

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2163--Continued