

WFAA-TV reel PKT 25
Saturday afternoon, November 23, 1963

INTERVIEW WITH LOUIS NICHOLS,
PRESIDENT OF DALLAS BAR ASSOCIATION

COMMENTATOR. --President of the Dallas Bar Association. He has been talking to Mr. Oswald and he will make a statement for you if he desires.

Q. Could we get your initials first, please?

Q. What is your name, sir?

NICHOLS. My name is H. Louis Nichols--L-O-U-I-S N-I-C-H-O-L-S.

Q. Nichols?

NICHOLS. N-I-C-H-O-L-S. I am the President of the Dallas Bar Association. The organized bar here in Dallas. We had been advised that statements have been made that Mr. Oswald was unable to get any Dallas lawyer who would make any inquiry about representation or that he was unable to get any representation here in Dallas. When I heard about that this afternoon, I decided I should come down and make inquiry as to whether or not he was represented by counsel, whether or not he desired to be represented by counsel, and whether or not he would ask the Dallas Bar Association to furnish representation to him. I have just visited with him in his cell and he advises that his first

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preference is that he be represented by a lawyer in New York, whose name I believe is John Abt, A-B-T. He then stated that if he could not be represented by that individual he would like to have a lawyer who was a member of the American Civil Liberties Union represent him. He says that if he was unable to get anyone from that organization, why then he might call upon the local Bar Association to represent him. I asked him whether or not at this time he was asking the Dallas Bar Association to do anything toward representing him and he advised that he was not, that he did not desire that we take any steps toward obtaining representation for him, and that if he was unable to obtain the other representation he might at a later time ask us to do so, and did ask that I would check back with him at a later time to see whether or not there would be any necessity or desirability that we attempt to furnish representation for him. Having contacted him and satisfied myself that he was not being deprived of representation by an attorney and having satisfied myself that he did not desire to be represented by a Dallas attorney, I then left, and that's the situation as it exists right now.

Q. May I have your name, sir.

NICHOLS. My name is H. Louis Nichols--L-O-U-I-S N-I-C-H-O-L-S.

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Q. Did he seem in possession of all of his faculties?

[Several people talking at once.]

Q. Did he deny the shooting to you?

NICHOLS. He didn't discuss the details of it. I did not ask him anything. He appeared to me to be perfectly rational and I could observe no abnormalities about him at all in the short time that I visited with him.

Q. Do you know anything about John Abt?

NICHOLS. I don't know anything about him.

Q. --

NICHOLS. No, I'm not.

Q. --

NICHOLS. He didn't say.

Q. --

NICHOLS. He didn't give any reason and I didn't ask him.

Q. Who's going to try to get Abt?

NICHOLS. I don't know.

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Q. --

NICHOLS. About three minutes.

Q. --

NICHOLS. He said he had talked to members of his family this afternoon, and they would endeavor to get in touch with Mr. Abt.

Q. Did he say why the Civil Liberties was his second choice?

NICHOLS. He said he was a member of that organization and would like to have a lawyer who was a member of that organization represent him.

Q. Does he personally know Abt?

NICHOLS. I don't know.

Q. How would you describe his mood?

Q. Did he appear to be calm?

NICHOLS. Well, he appeared to be calm and --

Q. Was he defiant?

NICHOLS. I didn't understand you.

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Q. Was he defiant?

NICHOLS. Defiant? He did not appear to be defiant. He discussed the matter with me in a very rational way and very calm way, and we discussed the matter and I am satisfied myself that he knew what he was talking about and didn't desire my services or the services of any member of the Dallas Bar Association.

Q. Did he fully understand the charges against him?

NICHOLS. I don't know.

Q. You didn't discuss it with him?

NICHOLS. I did not discuss the charges with him.

Q. As a lawyer, do you feel that he does not have--

NICHOLS. I do not believe so since he is not asking for a lawyer to represent him at this time.

Q. Do you think it's possible to hear the charges against him at this time?

NICHOLS. Probably. In Dallas it is.

Q. This question has been asked. May I ask it again, Is it possible for this man to get impartial treatment?

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NICHOLS. Well, it is my opinion it is.

Q. Do you think he can get a fair trial in Dallas?

NICHOLS. I think he can get a fair trial in Dallas.

Q. Do I understand, sir, that you are the boss in getting another-- -- only if it is not to have the Bar Association-- in other words get for him a Dallas attorney.

NICHOLS. Well, I have no control over any other attorney. I have no control over any attorney except myself. It is the feeling of the Dallas Bar Association that an indigent defendant should be represented and one of the programs of the Association is to furnish lawyers to represent defendants in criminal cases who are unable to provide their own attorneys.

Q. Have you had any calls from anyone in your organization about handling this case?

NICHOLS. I have had some inquiry about whether or not there were any Dallas lawyers representing this man and I made inquiry and determined that apparently there are none at this time. He hasn't requested any representative.

Q. Does the Dallas Bar Association--

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NICHOLS. It's a voluntary bar association. The State Bar of Texas is the integrated bar; the Dallas Bar Association is a voluntary association.

Q. Does the representation of indigent people include Communists? Has a Communist ever been so represented in Dallas?

NICHOLS. I don't know.

Q. --

NICHOLS. I did not. I merely asked him whether or not he desired to have an attorney appointed by the Association to assist him and he said, no.

Q. Were these calls from people in the attorney profession, or were they citizens?

NICHOLS. They were other lawyers that I am acquainted with.

Q. They were anxious to-- ?

NICHOLS. No, sir, they made inquiry as to whether or not the Dallas Bar Association was doing anything to see whether or not this man could obtain local representation and I decided I'd find out.

Q. Were these local members involved-- ?

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NICHOLS. I have not talked to any attorneys at all about it.

Q. Would you be willing to represent him?

NICHOLS. I do not practice criminal law and I've never tried a criminal case so I don't know, the answer to that.

Q. Thank you, Mr. Nichols.

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