

Mr. POE. I stayed there until Leavelle and his partner from the crime lab got there.

Mr. BALL. Then you left?

Mr. POE. Yes, sir; I got out and helped try to find the suspect.

Mr. BALL. Were you at the Texas Theatre?

Mr. POE. Yes, sir.

Mr. BALL. Did you see him apprehended?

Mr. POE. No, sir; I didn't.

Mr. BALL. You were out?

Mr. POE. At the back.

Mr. BALL. At the back?

Mr. POE. Yes, sir.

Mr. BALL. I think that is all, Mr. Poe.

This will be written up and submitted to you for your signature, and you can sign it if you wish, or waive your signature.

Which do you prefer?

Mr. POE. Well, sir; I don't have anything to hide. I will tell the truth.

Mr. BALL. Do you want to give your signature?

Mr. POE. I will sign it.

Mr. BALL. Okay. We'll do that. We can notify you and you can come up here and sign it.

Mr. POE. All right.

TESTIMONY OF JOHN GIBSON

The testimony of John Gibson was taken at 3:45 p.m., on April 8, 1964, in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Joseph A Ball, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. BALL. Will you please rise and hold up your hand and be sworn?

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give before the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. GIBSON. I do.

Mr. BALL. Will you state your name, please?

Mr. GIBSON. John Gibson.

Mr. BALL. What is your occupation?

Mr. GIBSON. I am manager of a retail store.

Mr. BALL. What kind of retail store is that?

Mr. GIBSON. It's Elko Camera store.

Mr. BALL. What is the address of the Elko Camera Store?

Mr. GIBSON. 239 West Jefferson.

Mr. BALL. Near the Texas Theatre?

Mr. GIBSON. I'm four doors from the Texas Theatre.

Mr. BALL. Where were you born, Mr. Gibson?

Mr. GIBSON. I was born in Brashear, Tex.

Mr. BALL. Where did you go to school?

Mr. GIBSON. Woodrow Wilson High School.

Mr. BALL. Here in Dallas?

Mr. GIBSON. In Dallas.

Mr. BALL. Well, what have you done since you got out of school?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, after I got out of school I went in service in the Navy and stayed in there 2 years and came back and went to work for Snap-Shots, Inc., and then went to work for Hermetic Seal in Garland, and then went to work for Elko.

Mr. BALL. On November 22, 1963, did you go to a picture show that day?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. BALL. About what time of day?

Mr. GIBSON. It was at 1 o'clock.

Mr. BALL. Do you go to the picture show very often—that particular theatre—the Texas Theatre?

Mr. GIBSON. Like I said—that's on Friday and that is depending on business.

Mr. BALL. About what time of day do you usually go on Friday?

Mr. GIBSON. About 1 o'clock—the same time I always go to lunch.

Mr. BALL. Where did you sit on this Friday, November 22, 1963?

Mr. GIBSON. I sat in the first chair from the rear on the far right-hand side.

Mr. BALL. Is that where you always sit?

Mr. GIBSON. That's where I always sit—that's my chair.

Mr. BALL. I have a picture here of the theatre, which I will have marked as Exhibit A, and will you look at that picture? Does that look like the interior of the Texas Theatre to you?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir; it's got more light on it than I've seen most of the time—that looks like it.

(Instrument marked by the reporter as Gibson Exhibit No. A, for identification.)

Mr. BALL. Is the seat in which you usually sit shown in that picture?

Mr. GIBSON. No, sir.

Mr. BALL. Where is that seat with reference to the picture?

Mr. GIBSON. Further to the left—from the main seating in the very back—it would be just past him.

Mr. BALL. There's a man sitting in the back in the first seat in the center aisle?

Mr. GIBSON. Right, and I would be—to his right.

Mr. BALL. In the same row?

Mr. GIBSON. In the same row.

Mr. BALL. To his right facing the screen?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes.

Mr. BALL. And on the other aisle, is that correct?

Mr. GIBSON. Right.

Mr. BALL. Did you see the lights come on in that theatre?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes.

Mr. BALL. Had you paid any attention to other people who had come in the theatre before the lights came on?

Mr. GIBSON. No.

Mr. BALL. Tell me what happened after the lights came on?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, when the lights came on, of course, as I said before, I know most of the people that work there in the show and I got up and started to the front to ask where the head usher or the girl was that works these lights—if something was wrong—I thought maybe they had a fire.

Mr. BALL. You say you started to the front, you mean you started into the lobby?

Mr. GIBSON. I started to the lobby, and just before I got to the door there were two or three—anyway the first police officer that got to me was carrying a shotgun, I remember that, and he says, "Is there anybody in the balcony?"

I said, "I don't know." He went on up into the balcony and I stood around out in the lobby for—I don't know—a minute or something, I guess, and they kept coming in and I stepped back inside the theatre just standing just behind where I had been sitting and I would say there were at least six or possibly more policemen downstairs. The rest of them were going upstairs.

Mr. BALL. What did you see happen?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, I was standing there watching all this going on and then the policeman started down the aisle—I would say there was another—I don't know, maybe six or eight—started down the aisles.

Mr. BALL. When you say "down the aisles," you mean all of the aisles?

Mr. GIBSON. Toward the screen—I don't know if they were going down all of them or not. I don't believe there was any—there was one policeman standing, it seems to me like, right on the other side of me, in the far aisle—just behind me—I don't think there was anybody going down the far aisle next to the wall on my side.

Mr. BALL. What aisles did you see policemen going down?

Mr. GIBSON. I saw them going down what I would call the two big center

aisles, and then the next thing was—Oswald was standing in the aisle with a gun in his hand.

Mr. BALL. That's the next thing you saw?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. BALL. Was there anybody with him—near him?

Mr. GIBSON. I couldn't swear to that—I don't know—you mean other policemen?

Mr. BALL. That's what I mean—was he in the aisles?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, he was in the aisle when I saw him.

Mr. BALL. What was he doing?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, he had this pistol in his hand.

Mr. BALL. Was anybody near him?

Mr. GIBSON. Just the officers.

Mr. BALL. What was the officer doing—did you say officers or police officer?

Mr. GIBSON. Officers.

Mr. BALL. Plural, officers?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes; there were more than one.

Mr. BALL. What were they doing?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, they were going toward him.

Mr. BALL. Did they have ahold of him at the time?

Mr. GIBSON. No; I don't believe so.

Mr. BALL. Did anyone have ahold of him at that time?

Mr. GIBSON. I don't think so.

Mr. BALL. Did you see any officer grab hold of Oswald?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. BALL. Which one—can you describe where he was and what he did—just tell us in your own words what you saw him do?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, just like—I guess you have heard this a lot of times—the gun misfired—it clicked and about the same time there was one police officer that positively had him.

Mr. BALL. What do you mean—“had him”?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, I mean he grabbed ahold of him.

Mr. BALL. Did he grab ahold of him before you heard the click or afterwards?

Mr. GIBSON. Gee, that's a question that's kind of hard to answer because I would say possibly seconds before or a second—maybe at the precise time the gun clicked. It happened pretty fast and like I say, I just went in to eat a hot-dog for lunch and I wasn't expecting any of this.

Mr. BALL. Did you see any officer strike Oswald?

Mr. GIBSON. No, sir; not directly; I saw them take him to the floor.

Mr. BALL. Did you see Oswald strike any officer?

Mr. GIBSON. [Shaking head for negative answer.]

Mr. BALL. You did not?

Mr. GIBSON. Not that I saw.

Mr. BALL. Did you hear anybody say anything?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, I heard the officers, but I don't remember what they said—I couldn't tell you if my life depended on it.

Mr. BALL. Did you hear Oswald say anything?

Mr. GIBSON. No.

Mr. BALL. You mentioned the fact that they took him to the floor, you mean they actually went down in the floor of the theatre or close to it?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, from where I was standing and looking across—they took him to the floor.

Mr. BALL. Were there any seats in the way when they fell?

Mr. GIBSON. No; I was standing up—yes; there was seats in the way, but I was looking at an angle.

Mr. BALL. Did Oswald fall on the seats or on the floor?

Mr. GIBSON. They fell on the floor as best I could tell.

Mr. BALL. Then what did you see happen?

Mr. GIBSON. I didn't see anything happen—I walked back to the front.

Mr. BALL. Did you see Oswald leave the theatre?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes; I saw the officers bring him out.

Mr. BALL. Describe what you saw at that time—I want to know how they had ahold of him?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, right after they took him to the floor, as I said, he had a gun in his hand and I turned around and walked back into the lobby, the front part of the theatre, and just right after I walked out into the lobby, one of the policemen yelled, "Lock the doors," and so I walked up and started locking the doors and the head usher, Butch, came running out and he started at one end and I started at the other end. There was six or eight doors in the front, and we locked them up and then they brought Oswald through the door—there was two police officers that had ahold of him, and his arms were bent around behind him—like so [indicating].

Mr. BALL. And did the officer have his arm around his neck?

Mr. GIBSON. I don't know—I don't think so—he did have a black eye and his shirt was about halfway torn off of him.

Mr. BALL. Did you hear Oswald say anything?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes.

Mr. BALL. What did he say?

Mr. GIBSON. He said, "I protest police brutality."

Mr. BALL. At any time did you see an officer, while the officers were struggling, with Oswald, did you see an officer strike Oswald with the butt of a shotgun?

Mr. GIBSON. No, sir; I didn't.

Mr. BALL. Did you see a shotgun in the hands of any of the officers who were struggling with Oswald?

Mr. GIBSON. No, sir; I didn't.

Mr. BALL. Did you see any officer in possession of a shotgun in the theatre?

Mr. GIBSON. Oh—yes, yes; I saw quite a few in possession of a shotgun

Mr. BALL. Were there any officers with shotguns near Oswald when he was struggling with these other officers?

Mr. GIBSON. Gee, I don't know—that I couldn't say—because like I say, when they took him down to the floor, all I could—or I should say down—I turned around and went back to the front.

Mr. BALL. Did you see the police talk to the other patrons of the theatre?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, as I said, the only thing that they said to me—the first policeman that I saw in the theatre was right after the lights came on and he asked me if there was anyone upstairs, but I can't definitely say I saw them talking to anybody.

Mr. BALL. Well, did any officers talk to you afterwards and get your name and address?

Mr. GIBSON. No.

Mr. BALL. Did you see them take the name and address of anybody else?

Mr. GIBSON. No, sir; right after they put Lee Oswald in the police car and drove off, I walked outside and went back over to the store.

Mr. BALL. I understood that one group of the police headed for Oswald?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, I don't believe they really headed for him—I believe they just started down through the theatre. From what the boy told me—Johnny Pardis told me, he followed him into the theatre and he went upstairs, and I believe this is why all the policemen went upstairs. I don't think they really headed for him. I mean, they just evidently, as I said, all of them went upstairs, with the exception of a small majority, say 6 or 8, maybe 12 downstairs and inside the theatre there.

Mr. BALL. Did they pass you on their way?

Mr. GIBSON. You mean up the stairs?

Mr. BALL. No; the smaller party that was downstairs.

Mr. GIBSON. No; I was standing on this far side right next to the wall.

Mr. BALL. And they were in an aisle over there?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, actually, they were two or three aisles over—there's two big main aisles, and then there's another small aisle that runs down the wall.

Mr. BALL. Was there any other patron of the theatre along the way that they went?

Mr. GIBSON. I don't know this, as I said, for a fact—this is what a lady at the show told me. She sent Butch, the head usher up on the stage to guard the exit back there and where he come from I don't know, because as I said,

when they took him to the floor, then I turned around and walked out into the lobby and one officer hollered, "Lock the doors," and Butch came through there to the doors.

Mr. BALL. But you didn't see other officers go up to any other patrons of the theatre over there on their way to Oswald?

Mr. GIBSON. No.

Mr. BALL. As they went along—they finally walked up and outside?

Mr. GIBSON. No; they were just looking in general it appeared to me.

Mr. BALL. Was there anyone who was sitting closer to them than Oswald was?

Mr. GIBSON. Gosh—I don't know—it's hard to remember, when you try.

Mr. BALL. You don't know why they went up to him and not someone else?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, as I said—I don't think they went up to him. As I said, the first time I saw him in the theatre definitely was when he was standing in the aisle with a gun in his hand. Now, somebody told me that Oswald jumped up and whirled around and said, "This is it," but this is something I don't know, so this is hearsay.

Mr. BALL. But would you think he stood up first before any police officer got to him? Or that near him?

Mr. GIBSON. He had to, because they took him from a standing position to the floor and he was standing up.

Mr. BALL. Did you see them before they came up to him?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes; I was watching them there, I was just standing in the corner—as I said, just looking around the corner—there is a chance you can see in the corner and I was looking around it and as I said, I don't know whether he got up and whirled around or what he did, but when I saw him he was facing the police with a gun in his hand.

Mr. BALL. The first you saw him he was standing?

Mr. GIBSON. He was standing.

Mr. BALL. And you didn't hear him say anything except on his way out?

Mr. GIBSON. Except on his way out—is the only thing I heard him say.

Mr. BALL. This will be written up and you can come down and sign it if you want to, or you can waive your signature. What would you like to do?

Mr. GIBSON. Well, I said it, I might as well sign it.

Mr. BALL. Okay. You will be called in to come down and sign it.

Mr. GIBSON. Thanks very much.

Mr. BALL. Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF JAMES PUTNAM

The testimony of James Putnam was taken at 11 a.m., on April 9, 1964, in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. John Hart Ely, member of the staff of the President's Commission.

Mr. ELY. Would you stand up and be sworn, please?

Mr. PUTNAM. All right.

Mr. ELY. Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. PUTNAM. I do.

Mr. ELY. Would you state your name, please?

Mr. PUTNAM. James Putnam.

Mr. ELY. And where do you live?

Mr. PUTNAM. 2015 Joan Drive.

Mr. ELY. What is your occupation?

Mr. PUTNAM. Police officer—sergeant of police.

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

Mr. PUTNAM. Ten years and four months.

Mr. ELY. Could you give us something of your background before you started