

Mr. STERN. At the conclusion of your interview, did you leave the office in which he was being guarded and leave him behind?

Mr. CLEMENTS. Yes; I did.

Mr. STERN. When you next saw him at this press conference in the basement, can you describe the conditions in that room? How many people were present?

Mr. CLEMENTS. The corridor on the third floor was quite crowded, and when I reached the basement there were, I would estimate, perhaps 50 people, all told, including officers, members of the press, perhaps others. There was a crowded condition I would say.

Mr. STERN. Quite a great deal of noise?

Mr. CLEMENTS. I don't recall any great amount of noise. Although, I do recall that members of the press were attempting to get Oswald to respond to questions.

Mr. STERN. How did he seem at that time?

Mr. CLEMENTS. I saw no difference in his appearance to that at the time I had talked with him.

Mr. STERN. Did he then seem to you to be in command of himself, and alert?

Mr. CLEMENTS. Yes; he did.

Mr. STERN. Mr. Clements, did you make a record of your interview with Oswald?

Mr. CLEMENTS. I did.

Mr. STERN. How soon after the interview did you dictate that memorandum?

Mr. CLEMENTS. The following day, November 23, 1963.

Mr. STERN. And have you reviewed that memorandum to refresh your memory of what occurred?

Mr. CLEMENTS. I have.

Mr. STERN. And you had no further contact, or didn't observe Oswald, Mr. Clements, as I understand it, from the time of the press conference until he was, himself, killed on November 24?

Mr. CLEMENTS. That's correct.

Mr. STERN. Thank you very much.

Mr. CLEMENTS. Yes.

Mr. STERN. The reporter will transcribe your testimony. You can, if you wish, review a copy of the transcript and sign it, or waive your signature and the reporter will send it directly to the Commission, whichever you prefer.

Mr. CLEMENTS. I think I would prefer to review it after it is typed.

Mr. STERN. Fine.

The reporter will get in touch with you and give you an opportunity to review it.

Thank you very much for coming in.

TESTIMONY OF GREGORY LEE OLDS

The testimony of Gregory Lee Olds was taken at 4:05 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. Samuel A. Stern, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. STERN. Will you stand and raise your right hand, please.

Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you are about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. OLDS. I do.

Mr. STERN. Sit down, please, Mr. Olds. For the record will you state your name and address.

Mr. OLDS. Gregory Lee Olds, 1316 Timberlake, Richardson, Tex.

Mr. STERN. What is your profession?

Mr. OLDS. I am an editor of a weekly newspaper.

Mr. STERN. Where?

Mr. OLDS. In Richardson.

Mr. STERN. What is your connection with the Dallas Civil Liberties Union?

Mr. OLDS. I am its President.

Mr. STERN. Were you its president in November of 1963?

Mr. OLDS. Yes.

Mr. STERN. Can you tell us what transpired on November 22, in connection with your efforts and the efforts of your organization to assure that Lee Harvey Oswald was not being denied his right to counsel?

Mr. OLDS. Yes. I got a phone call about 10:30 that night from one of our board members saying they had been called by the President of the Austin affiliate who was concerned about the reports that were being circulated on the air. I think Oswald was directly quoted as saying he had not been given the opportunity to have counsel, and the suggestion was made that it might be well to check into this matter, and I believe I called this—I first called the police department to inquire about this, and finally talked to Captain Fritz, Capt. Will Fritz, and was—raised the question, and he said, "No—" that Oswald had been given the opportunity and declined. And I called—then I called the board member back who had called me—

Mr. STERN. Excuse me. Did Captain Fritz say that Oswald did not want counsel at that time, or that he was trying to obtain his own counsel?

Mr. OLDS. What I was told, that he had been given the opportunity and had not made any requests. So, I called our board member back and conferred with him and he suggested that we go down and see about it at the police department, in person, to get further assurances. And he and I and two others of our organization met down there at the Plaza Hotel lobby about 11:15, directly across the street from the police station, and we discussed the matter there, and I called Mayor Earle Cabell at his office, but was told that he was busy at the moment so we went then over to the police station, and we got in there. Let's see, it was up on the—I guess the third or fourth floor, wherever Oswald was being questioned, and Chuck Webster, a lawyer—professor of law, who was known to the other three men with me said he had been there a good part of the time since the assassination, and that—we told him what we were there for, and he said he thought he knew who we could see to get our assurances. Did you have something?

Mr. STERN. No.

Mr. OLDS. We went to—first, we talked—conferred with Captain King, I believe is the right name, who is, I believe, assistant to the chief of police. I'm not sure on that. We all went in with Mr. Webster, and this was shortly after 11:35, or 11:40, and Captain King was, at this time, talking to somebody and said that Oswald had just been charged with the assassination of President Kennedy. He had here—earlier been charged with the assassination—I mean the murder of the policeman, Tippit, and we told Captain King what we were there for, and he said, he assured us that Oswald had not made any requests for counsel. And we went outside of the office and went downstairs, at least—I didn't, but two of the others, I believe, went downstairs to the basement where Justice of the Peace David Johnston was. He was the one that had held the—I believe an arraignment, I believe is the right term, at 7:30 when the first charge of murder was filed against Oswald, and he also assured us that there had been an opportunity of—Oswald's rights had been explained, and he had declined counsel. Said nothing beyond that. I think that was the extent of our inquiry.

Mr. STERN. What happened next?

Mr. OLDS. Also we were—I believe Chief Curry was quoted to us as having said some—also that Oswald had been advised of his rights to counsel. I am not sure who told me that. I believe that it was Mr. Webster. That was about all. We felt fairly well satisfied that Oswald probably had not been deprived of his rights, so, we then broke up. I think the other men went home, and I went downstairs. I heard that there was going to be a press conference, so I thought I could stand in on that and—do you want me to go ahead and detail that?

Mr. STERN. Yes, this was —

Mr. OLDS. This was right at midnight, I think, when Oswald was brought in.

Mr. STERN. Brought in where?

Mr. OLDS. This was a squadroom and I am not sure what the term is. It is

in the basement of the police station. That was being used as a pressroom. I believe it is some sort of a classroom or something of that sort. He was brought in there. I suppose a hundred reporters standing around on tables, and I understand Ruby was there at the time, too, up near the front.

Mr. STERN. You don't know that, though?

Mr. OLDS. I don't remember seeing him.

Mr. STERN. Do you know Ruby?

Mr. OLDS. No; I don't. No; I remember someone saying what he was supposed to have said when—and helped somebody answer a question. I forget what it was, and Oswald came in, and he was there about 5 minutes—

Mr. STERN. Were you permitted to enter this room without displaying any identification?

Mr. OLDS. Yes; I wasn't stopped at all. Nobody seemed to pay—it was pretty well confused around there, and nobody questioned me at all.

Mr. STERN. Would you have been known to the police as a newspaperman?

Mr. OLDS. I had never been in the police building. No one had any way of knowing who I was, or what my business was.

Mr. STERN. Did you have to identify yourself to get into this building to begin with?

Mr. OLDS. No; no problem getting into the building. No one in the lobby, and I don't believe there was anyone at all until you get up to the third or fourth floor where the police department section of the building begins.

Mr. STERN. What were the conditions of this room and the scene?

Mr. OLDS. Well, you mean the room where the press conference was held, where Oswald came in? It was very noisy, and when Oswald came in it was very confusing. The reporters were yelling at each other to get out of the way, and they were, the photographers were having a very bad time with it, and people kept crowding toward the front and standing on tables so that they could see and hear and Oswald was there such a brief time, and was not able to be heard beyond the first row of reporters who were circled around him. Thereafter reporters were interviewing reporters who were on the front row to see what had been said, and some sort of confusion existed, and enough of—oh, probably 50 reporters standing around there, and it was a very confusing situation it seemed. And Oswald had to be brought through the hall on his way from the interrogation room to his cell, so, he couldn't avoid being seen, and it was at this time that he was making the statements that were being quoted.

Mr. STERN. Did you observe this?

Mr. OLDS. No; I didn't. I saw this on television, but I could imagine it from that.

Mr. STERN. How did he look to you when he was at this press conference?

Mr. OLDS. He looked remarkably composed and determined. He had a—I remarked afterwards that I would have been very much distraught, and he seemed very well self-contained and determined and maintained his innocence. I heard that, and beyond that scratch above—on his forehead and the eye that was swollen and the little—he looked all right.

He looked a little tired, of course, and I think his clothes were dirty, but he looked remarkably in good shape, I thought.

Mr. STERN. Did this give you any further assurance that—about the right to counsel question?

Mr. OLDS. Possibly so, it was—

Mr. STERN. I don't want to put the idea in your head.

Mr. OLDS. Well, I know, but we had the idea that Oswald was not being accurate when he said he had been denied, because in our dealings with the police here, we have had reason to believe that they are very careful of this sort of thing. And certainly in a case of this notoriety, certainly, our tendency was to believe that, but I have always been sorry that we didn't talk with Oswald, because it was not clear whether we would be permitted to see him that night or not.

Mr. STERN. But, you did not ask to see him?

Mr. OLDS. No; we did not, which I think was a mistake on my part.

Mr. STERN. Did anything transpire on Saturday, November 23?

Mr. OLDS. Not so much. I was watching television most of the day and then

the matter of counsel was raised, I think, during that day. During the—I suppose when Oswald was being transferred in the hall again, and—let's see—this is when Mr. Nichols went down late this afternoon, I think around 5:30, and he reported after that that he had seen Oswald in respect to the same reasons that we had for going down there Saturday night, to see if he wanted some sort of legal representation, and to make sure whether or not he was denied—being denied it, and he said that he was satisfied that—in essence, Oswald told Nichols he was satisfied with the situation. I can detail this conversation if you would like, as it was told to me.

Mr. STERN. No.

Mr. OLDS. Well, that was the essence of what was found out.

Mr. STERN. Was there any mention of the American Civil Liberties Union?

Mr. OLDS. Yes; it was at this time that we first heard the idea that Oswald might be a member of the American Civil Liberties Union, and this surprised us, because we felt we would have had a record of it in our files, but there is often a lapse of time when a member moves from one area to another and it takes some time to transfer him to the local affiliate. To make sure of this I called the national office in New York City, and it was night, of course there was no one there, but I finally got a number of one of the staff members and talked to him at his home in New Jersey and told him about it, and he said, he would check on the matter. Have somebody in New York, who lived near the office to go in and see about it, and he did and they found no such record at that time.

However, it was later discovered that on November 4, he had sent a check for \$2 to the office, which was, I believe, discovered 3 weeks later.

Mr. STERN. Mr. Olds, I think that covers the matters that I am interested in. Is there anything further that you would like to tell us? Anything that you—

Mr. OLDS. Possibly later after this matter was disposed of, we became interested in the legal status of Oswald's wife, Marina, and a story in the New York Times, I believe December 19, said something to the effect that perhaps she was being held incommunicado and in some way illegally detained. Anyway, her status was not clear as far as the reporter was concerned, and our national office in New York City got a number of inquiries both by phone and personal calls and letters, telegrams, and they asked us in turn then, to see what we could find out about it. After a certain amount of negotiations with the Secret Service and FBI and so on, we sent a letter to Mrs. Oswald and she later wrote us that she was content with her situation, and was very happy with her status, in fact, it was for her interest.

Mr. STERN. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Olds for coming in today.

The reporter will transcribe your testimony and you will then be notified when it is available and afforded an opportunity to read it and sign it. If you would like to waive that that is possible and the reporter would send the transcript directly to the Commission.

Mr. OLDS. I will be glad to sign it. Do you want me to come down here and do that?

Mr. STERN. Yes.

Mr. OLDS. When do you think it might be?

Mr. STERN. It should be within the next week or so.

Mr. OLDS. All right, fine.

Mr. STERN. Thank you very much.

TESTIMONY OF H. LOUIS NICHOLS

The testimony of H. Louis Nichols was taken at 9:30 a.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. Samuel A. Stern, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.