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Assassination Records Review Board Final Determination Notification

AGENCY : HSCA
RECORD NUMBER : 180-10090-10275
RECORD SERIES : NUMBERED FILES
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 000925

September 26, 1996

Status of Document: Open in Full

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Reason for Board Action: The Review Board's decision was premised on several factors including: (a) the significant historical interest in the document in question; (b) the absence of evidence that the release of the information would cause harm to the United States or to any individual.

Number of Postponements: 0

No Recommended Postponements

Board Review Completed: 08/06/96

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Page : 1

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY INFORMATION

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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

Routing Slip

000925

NO.

DATE

3/13/77

Document I.D.

Interview

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Curry, Jesse

COPY TO

- Robert Blakey
- Gary Cornwell
- Kenneth Klein
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- Jim Wolf
- Donovan Gay
- Jackie Hess
- Cliff Fenton

Team #1

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Team #3

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Team #5

Form #2

Interview of: Jesse Edward Curry, former Police Chief - Dallas

Interviewed by: Howard Gilbert, Staff Counsel
Jack Moriarty, Investigator

Date: March 13, 1977, Sunday

000925

Time: 6:20 p.m.

Location: Motel room, Stemmons Inn Motel

G: Now, Chief Curry, you can see that we have a tape recorder on now, can't you?

C: Yes, I can.

G: And this statements being taken with your permission.

C: Right

G: You've agreed to allow us to record this portion.

C: Yes.

G: Now, Chief Curry, we've been chatting with you, ah, for a few minutes here, and you indicated to us that, I believe, on the day of the assassination, that you had made a particular comment over national radio and TV regarding the FBI's knowledge of Oswald. Is that right?

C: That's correct.

G: Would you tell us, as best as you can recall, the type of comment that you made over the, with national coverage.

C: Well, I was returning from the homicide bureau to my office which was on the, being on the third floor of the City Hall. The hallways were crammed; ah, crowded with all the news media, radio, TV, and there must have been seventy or a hundred in this hallway. Any time that I appeared or anyone that was connected with the interrogation of Oswald, any time they came out, why they were surrounded. And this was the case, I had been in the homicide office, I don't recall exactly why I went there, but I had been there, and I'd been in the office where Capt. Fritz was interrogating Oswald. I left to return to my office, and I was surrounded by the news media and one on the questions that were raised by someone, I don't know who, some reporter, asked me if we knew Oswald, previous to the arrest.

G: And what was your response to that?

C: And my response was that we did not, we had no knowledge of Oswald even living in the area or having any kind of background that he had. But, that I understood that the FBI did know him and had him in their files, but they had not told us that he was here.

G: Now, very shortly after you completed that statement, what occurred?

C: I went on to my office, which must have been a matter of four, five minutes working myself through the crowd and on into my office, and when I got there, the phone was waiting for me and it was Gordon Shanklin, who was the agent in charge of this FBI area, here, north Texas area.

G: That's Gordon Shanklin, and he was the agent in charge of the Dallas office of the FBI?

C: Right.

G: And you knew Mr. Shanklin, did you not?

C: Yes, I knew him well.

G: And what was the purpose of his phone call to you?

C: He seemed very upset, and excited, and he said something to the effect that - My God, Jess, what have you done to me?

G: And what did you reply?

C: And I said - what do you mean, what have I done to you - and he said the statement you just made that the FBI knew Oswald was here. And I said, Well, you did know he was here, and we did not know he was here. And he said, well, you got to retract that statement, he said I've got thirty minutes to get a retraction on that statement, or I'm through.

G: Now, did he tell you, Mr. Shanklin tell you, who had given him 30 minutes to get a retraction?

C: No, he did not. I presumed that probably Mr. Hoover had immediately got on the phone, when I made this statement, he had immediately called, because he, ah, it was only a matter of three or four minutes from the time I made the statement until I was in my office and Mr. Shanklin was on the phone.

G: Did Shanklin make it clear to you that he, Shanklin, had been given that directive by someone else?

C: Well, that's what he told me, he said - I've got thirty minutes to get a retraction.

G: All right. And what did you say to Shanklin, at that point?

C: I told him, I said, well, Gordon, I'm not going to retract the statement because I believe it to be true. I said, one of your men told my Lieutenant that you did know, and that you had him in your files, and he personally had been working on the case.

G: Now, which FBI agent was this that you were referring to?

C: An agent named Hosty.

G: H-o-s-t-y?

C: Right, and he had made this statement to a lieutenant of mine who worked, I believe, at criminal intelligence at the time.

G: What was his name?

C: Lt. Jack Rebel.

G: Spell the last name, please.

C: R-e-v-i-l-l or R-e-v-i-l, I don't know whether there are two ls of not.

G: And was this during, ah, did this come out also during an interrogation of Oswald?

C: Oswald said he knew Hosty, I don't know who asked him the question, but he said that he knew Hosty, and that Hosty had been harrasing his wife. And we did find Hosty's, ah, license number and phone number, I think, in ah, I think it was his phone number, in possession of Oswald.

G: Did you in some fashion try to accommodate Shanklin's request?

C: I told him, I said I'll do this much, I said, I will say that I cannot say of my own personal knowledge that you knew it, but that's as far as I'll go.

G: You mean, in other words, since your knowledge was based on what your lieutenant had told you, you were saying that your knowledge was hearsay, and therefore, you had no personal knowledge of the contact.

C: Right. I was sure that these facts were true, but I couldn't have got on a stand, under oath, and say I know the FBI has a file on him, because I have not seen the FBI's file.

G: In other words, you were basing that on the hearsay objection.

C: Right. On what Hosty had told my lieutenant, and I had the utmost faith in the statements given to me. Revill wrote up a memorandum shortly after that, telling me what had been said.

G: Was Shanklin satisfied with your qualified retraction?

C: As I recall it, he was not satisfied, but he, he, I think he was convinced that I wasn't going out there and say, - look, I've told me a lie, the FBI doesn't know this man.

G: Now, at some time later, did you ever learn that Shanklin either agreed with this conversation with you took place, or whether or not he denied it?

C: From what I've been told and read in articles of people who have interviewed me and then contacted Shanklin, he has always said - I don't remember telling Jess that he had to retract that statement.

G: Now, did he, ah, he say I -- have you been told that he didn't remember telling you or denied telling you.

C: Well, I think --- I think it'd be more likely that he denied telling me. He said that - from what I recall reading, reports from newspaper men or news media who contacted Shanklin regarding this, he said - he said, I just told Jess the facts. Now, I don't know what he meant by telling me the facts.

G: Now, Chief Curry, are you quite positive in your own mind now, that when Shanklin called you, he said that if you didn't retract that statement, of the FBI's knowledge of Oswald, that he, Shanklin, was through. Are you quite sure of that?

C: I'm sure of that.

G: Mr. Moriarty, with respect to this particular area, do you have any, ah, thing to add or any other questions?

M: No, no, I can't think of anything.

G: All right, then, Chief, I'm going to terminate the recording of this statement, on this point, at this time, it is now 6:29 p.m. on the same day and date.

G: Chief, I just reviewed my notes, it's 6:30 now, and I noticed something that I had failed to ask you about. I believe when

you had spoken to me a few minutes ago, you told me that the Dallas Police Dept. had a rookie school which had, usually had the benefit of FBI instructors. Is that right?

C: Always, since the inception of the school, they had always carried certain subjects and taught them in the school.

G: How long had the - when did the school originate?

C: I believe in 1946.

G: So, up to the point of the assassination, it had been some 19 years that the FBI had participated in your school.

C: Yeah

G: After you had made this statement on national, with national coverage, did anything change about FBI assistance at the school?

C: Yes, I was told within one or two days after that by one of the agents, who, ah, his name is Roberts, he's deceased at this time,

G: That's the FBI agent?

C: Yes. He, he, ah, instructed in all the schools and he told me, he said, Jess, ah, why don't you just get somebody else to take our subjects, we're just so busy, we're not going to be able to - to go ahead with our instruction at the school, and I said, well, that's mighty strange, I said, you've always been able to, he says well, I think it would just be best if you just get someone else to do it. And, - which we, of course, did. But, from that day until I left the Police Dept., retired, in 1966, from that day until my retirement, there was never another FBI man instructing in one of our recruit schools nor in our in-service training schools, which they had always participated in, nor did I have a man invited to the FBI national academy, and as I recall, there must have not been over one or two schools since 1946 that we did not have representative from Dallas in the FBI national Academy.

G: Now, this is an an adacemy where law enforcement officials from all over the coutry are instructed by the FBI in order to gain expertise? Is that correct?

C: Right

G: And you apply to that academy for permission to have one of your men attend. Is that right?

C: Right, and they attend by invitation.

G: And they had always attended it in the past, but after your comments, ah, with national coverage, ah, your department was not honored with permission to allow officers to attend.

C: Correct. Until I retired, and immediately after I retired they started inviting the, ah, members of the, some members of the Dallas Police Dept., they invited some member to attend the schools. And I believe that if you checked the record, you'd find probably that they - almost every school that they've had, has had a Dallas Policeman in it.

G: What is your opinion as to why the FBI terminated its services to the Dallas Police Dept.

C: I think they did it because of the statement I made, regarding that the FBI had knowledge of Oswald, and that they had failed to tell us, and I think it was, ah, as a result of that they just shut us off, which, ah, if you, ah, if you are familiar with law enforcement - law enforcement agencies around the country, you will find others that have been more or less black-balled, say, and had the same experience that I had. I think Mr. Parker, from Los Angeles and I believe, ah, New York City was the same way,.....

G: You mean persons who had not toed the line with the FBI?

C: It was pretty common knowledge among the local law enforcement officers around the country, that if you made Mr. Hoover mad, why, you'd get no cooperation from him, in the way of training.

G: All right, thank you, Chief Curry, it is now 6:34 and we terminate the statement. Thank You.