

Reel 10 Take 52

Q. Penn, how far are we from Dallas?

A. Well, we're twenty-five miles from here to the-
to the Court House - Dallas.

Q. Why have you become involved in the assassination inquiry?

A. Well, of course I loved President Kennedy very much. I attended the Ruby trial. But I did not do actual investigating until I began reading the Warren Report and realizing that something was amiss in that Report - and I - since I am on the scene I thought that - uh - I was one, certainly, that could do my bit to investigate this thing further.

(background conversation)

Q. Why have you become involved in the assassination inquiry?

A. Well I loved President Kennedy very much. And then I attended the Ruby trial. I was one of the few weekly newspapers that covered the Ruby trial. And my actual investigating did not begin until I started reading the Warren Report and realized that something was very, very much amiss in reading that Report. I really believe that the only way you can believe the Warren Report is to not read it.

Q. How has your proximity to Dallas affected the course of your investigation?

Source: Wisconsin Historical Society, USMss, 117AN "Rush to Judgment" Box 60, Folder 1

A. Well, as an editor in - uh - in an adjoining county to Dallas County, I felt that it was my duty - uh - as an editor, to ferret out as much of the facts as I feel had been -uh- covered up, and - uh - whitewashed over - uh - For twenty years here in Midlothian I tried to cover the local scene. You know I feel that - that most editors are quite willing to point out the crooks in Washington, but they're very shy about pointing to the crooks across the street in ^{the} City Hall or in the School Board. But with the assassination of President Kennedy I have almost completely ignored my local situation in an effort to uncover as much as I could of the hidden story of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Q. Has it been difficult to get the facts?

A. Yes, it's been difficult - uh - Nearly all of the witnesses are -are reluctant or, as in most cases, they refuse to talk at all. That is, if they're still alive. There have been at least eight murders - or eight strange deaths, some of them outright murder, and some of them just strange deaths, of people who were very closely related to either Jack Ruby or ^{Harvey} ~~Lee~~ ~~Harvey~~ Oswald. Many of the - those who are still a-
uh - live have been threatened / some of them anonymous threats and some of them / ^{have been} outright - uh - advice from the Police Department or other Federal authorities, not to talk about the assassination.

(background conversation)

Reel 11 Take 53

(more background conversation)

Q. Why have you become involved in the assassination inquiry?

A. Well I loved President John Kennedy very much. Of course I was one of the few weekly newspapers who covered the Jack Ruby trial. My actual investigation didn't work until I started reading the Warren Report and realizing that something was greatly amiss. I believe the only way that you could possibly believe the Warren Report is to not read it.

Q. How has your proximity to Dallas affected the course of your investigation?

A. Well, as a Weekly editor in Midlothian for twenty years, I covered the local scene. You know I believe that most editors are rather reluctant, are pretty shy, about covering corruption at the local level. They're quite willing to jump on the crooks way off in Washington, but, at the local level, they're pretty hesitant. So I covered the School Board Meetings, ^{the} City Council Meetings in Midlothian. But with the assassination of President Kennedy, and with the - the inaccuracies and the withheld information in the Warren Report, I have almost completely ignored the local situation and am working on the assassination story.

Q. Have you found it difficult to uncover the facts this

A. Yes, it's very difficult. All of the witnesses are reluctant. Most of them completely refuse to answer any question. Some of them have gone into hiding - or at least cannot be found by me. And many - in many cases the police have actually told or - ~~in~~ as some case - some witnesses - say "Federal authorities" have told them not to talk about the assassination.

Q. Do you find that witnesses are frightened?

A. Yes - uh - the witnesses are frightened - uh - uh Some of them went into hiding. I'm - I'm sure that I've spent at least one month searching for Earlene Roberts. And I don't know of any person, any news man, or any investigator - uh - that talked to Earlene Roberts after she testified before the Warren Commission. And her testimony was quite startling testimony.

Q. Now, of course -

A. Now, of course, she is dead. And she's not the only one. There are at least eight persons now dead, either from murder or at least strange deaths, who were closely related to Jack Ruby or Lee Harvey Oswald.

Q. Can you give us one - one instance/ of a witness who died a strange death?

A. Yes I think -uh- among the strangest is that of Betty MacDonald - uh - who was - uh - an alibi witness for the man arrested for shooting - uh - Warren Reynolds. Warren Reynolds is the man who saw Oswald run-

ning from the -er- killing site of Tippit, and
in
Reynolds, a very short time thereafter, was shot
through the head, but he did recover. Uh - the man
that was arrested for that shooting was a fella named
Garner. And Garner's alibi was that he was with the
- this girl MacDonald at the time. About a week after
she gave the alibi, MacDonald was arrested for fight-
ing with her room-mate. I think it's rather strange
that the room-mate was not also arrested. One hour
after MacDonald was put in the Dallas County Jail,
she was found hanged in her cell, and of course the
police said she hung herself. That's one of the ex-
amples and there-there are many others. Bill Hunter
was shot through the heart in the police station out
in Long Beach, California. Uh - Cody, Jim Cody on the
Times-Herald, was killed by a karate chop to the throat
in his apartment in Dallas. And the man that was the
most likely -uh- suspect was not even indicted for the
murder. There are about - there ~~was~~ ^{'re} a total of about
eight of these people who .. directly involved. The
death of-uh- of-uh- Tom Howard is a very strange one.
They said he died of an apparent heart attack. There
was no autopsy, but I know personally that Tom Howard
- Howard - was acting very strangely three days before
he died. I-and other people who saw him- felt like
that he was very frightened. Three days later he was

dead. Now he was the man who saw Jack Ruby first after the killing of Oswald. And he's another one of those strange deaths that we've had to put up with and, and take at - uh - face value. I would love to see a comed - a computer -uh- faced with the problem of coming up with the probabilities in the - of the assassination taking place the way it did, with all of these strange incidents that took place before, and are continuing to take place after the assassination. I think all of us who love our - this country should be alerted that something is wrong in the land.

Q. Well, whether these deaths are related to the assassination or not, does-does-does the existence of these deaths, the fact that witnesses have died in this fashion, uh - tend to make it more difficult to secure statements from those witnesses ^{who} ~~that~~ have survived?

A. Certainly. There is very little evidence - first-hand evidence left, with the erasing of the lives of - uh - Tippit and Oswald and - uh - and these other people who were - had first-hand conversations with either Ruby or Oswald. That has made the gathering of evidence very difficult. And the continued threats - uh - on these people who still have evidence - uh - makes it... makes them hesitant to talk, and it makes anyone trying to do investigative work very very difficult.

Q. Do you know of any witnesses - Commission witnesses -

who were threatened before they testified before the Commission?

A. Mrs. Clemmons - uh - was one. She witnessed the killing of - uh - of Tippit. One - ah - lawyer in Dallas by the name of Droby was - uh - threatened - uh - before Oswald was killed, and he completely withdrew from the case. I don't believe I can remember any others just now.

Q. (Tice and -) sotto voce)

A. Oh - both Mrs. Tice, Mrs. Wilma Tice who saw Ruby out at the Parkland Hospital has been threatened, and - and - uh - Nancy Perrin Rich, who was a very important witness, has been threatened.

(Cut)

Reel 12 Take 54

(low background conversation)

A. Well let's take the case of Betty Mooney MacDonald, one of Jack Ruby's strippers. A fellow named Warren Reynolds saw a man running from the scene of the Tippit slaying. Shortly thereafter Reynolds was shot through the head. And before Reynolds was shot, he could not identify the man running from the scene as Oswald. Then he was shot through the head, and a fella named Garner was arrested. Two days - uh - then MacDonald was the alibi for Garner. She said Garner could not have shot Reynolds "because he was with me at the time." Two days after her alibi, Mooney - Betty Mooney MacDonald

was arrested for fighting with her room-mate - although the room-mate was not arrested. MacDonald was put in jail that night, and an hour later she was found hanged in her cell. And of course the Dallas Police said she "hung herself".

Q. Did Reynolds finally testify before the Commission?

A. After Reynolds recovered from his wound he testified and he was able to identify Oswald.

(Cut)

Reel 12 Take 55

Q. Penn, how far are we now from Dallas? Penn, how far are we from Dallas? Why have you become involved in the assassination inquiry? How has your proximity to Dallas affected the course of your investigation? Can you give us one example? Did Warren Reynolds then testify before the Commission?

(background conversation)

Reel 12 Take 56

Q. Penn, how far are we from Dallas? Why have - why have you become involved in the assassination inquiry?

(background conversation)

Penn, how far are we from Dallas? Why have you become involved in the assassination inquiry? How has your proximity to Dallas affected the course of your investigation? Could you give us one example? And then did Warren Reynolds testify before the Commission?

(background instructions - do something-this time looking at Penn....)

Q. Penn, how far are we from Dallas? Why have you become involved in the assassination inquiry? How has your proximity to Dallas affected the course of your investigation? Could you give us one example? And then did Warren Reynolds testify before the Commission?

(background conversation)

Reel 12 Take 57

This is the office of Penn Jones Jr. in Midlothian, Texas. John Howard Griffin, the American author, born in Dallas and now living in Mansfield, Texas, just eleven miles from here, observed of the Warren Report: "There were loose ends, many loose ends

(try that again etc.)

Reel 12 Take 58

We are in the office of Penn Jones Jr. in Midlothian, Texas. John Howard Griffin, the American author, born in Dallas and now living eleven miles from here in Mansfield, Texas, observed of the Warren Report: "There were loose ends, many loose ends. Some few men in this country were not satisfied with these loose ends. Some - some of these had obsessive theories

there were loose ends
(Let's take that again)- can hear your pencil scratching)

There were loose - there were loose ends, many loose ends. Some few men in this country were not satisfied with these loose ends. Some of these had obsessive theories and tried to make the loose ends arrange themselves in such

a way as to prove those theories. They do not count for anything. Others, however, with a great dedication to truth, wherever it might lead them, have sought to resolve these loose ends for the sake of history and truth. They have devoted themselves to gathering, sifting and re-examining evidence. They have sought to follow truth, even when this has led them down roads that sickened and terrified them. Penn Jones belongs to this latter small group. Since that terrible day, he has dedicated himself to resolving the riddle, and he has followed authentic leads, abandoned countless ones that turned out not to be authentic

(background conversation)

Reel 12 Take 59

(instructions to Penn to move a little to right) etc./

There were loose ends, many loose ends. Some few men in this country were not satisfied with those loose ends. Some of these had obsessive theories and tried to make the loose ends arrange themselves in such a way as to prove these theories. They do not count for anything. Others, however, with a great dedication to truth wherever it might lead them, have sought to resolve these loose ends for the sake of history and truth. They have devoted themselves to gathering, sifting, and re-examining evidence. They have sought to follow truth even when this has led them down roads that sickened and

terrified them. Penn Jones belongs to this latter small group. Since that terrible day he has dedicated himself to resolving the riddle, and he has followed authentic leads, abandoned countless ones that turned out not to be authentic. Is it wise to do this? Is it wise to lift the lid from a mystery and risk releasing a stench such as the world has never known, a stench that might well damage the world. Some men have faith that the truth is the ultimate wisdom. It is a faith that can hardly be faulted. Penn Jones is moved by that faith. He is also moved by a profound sense of responsibility toward his country, toward truth, and toward evidence. The truth risks being unspeakably ugly in this instance and at this point in its unfoldment. If, however, all the evidence should ultimately lead by miracle to some simple and benign solution, the man heaving the greatest sigh of relief would be Penn Jones.

Reel 13 Take 16

This is the office of Penn Jones, Jr. in Midlothian, Texas. John Howard Griffin, the American author, born in Dallas and now living just eleven miles from here in Mansfield, Texas observed of the Warren Report: "There were loose ends, many loose ends. Some few men in this country were not satisfied with these loose ends. Some of these had obsessive theories and tried to make the loose ends arrange themselves in such a way as to prove these theories. They do not count for anything. Others, however, with a great dedication to truth, wherever it might lead them, have sought to resolve these loose ends for the sake of history and truth. They have devoted themselves to gathering, sifting, and re-examining evidence. They have sought to follow truth even when this has led them down roads that sickened and terrified them. Penn Jones belongs to this latter small group. Since that terrible day, he has dedicated himself to resolving the riddle and he has followed authentic leads, abandoned countless ones that turned out not to be authentic. Is it wise to do this? Is it wise to lift the lid from a mystery and risk releasing a stench such as the world has never known, a stench that might well damage the world? Some men have the faith that truth is the ultimate wisdom. It is a faith that can

hardly be faulted. Penn Jones is moved by that faith. He is also moved by a profound sense of responsibility toward his country, toward truth, and toward evidence. The truth risks being unspeakably ugly in this instance and at this point in its unfoldment. If however all the evidence should ultimately lead by some miracle to a simple and benign solution, the man heaving the greatest sigh of relief would be Penn Jones Jr.

Reel 13 Take 61

This is the office of Penn Jones Jr. in Midlothian, Texas. John Howard Griffin, born in Dallas

(let's take that again)

This is the office of Penn Jones Jr. in Midlothian, Texas. John Howard Griffin, the American author born in Dallas, and now residing just eleven miles from here in Mansfield, Texas observed of the Warren Commission Report : "There were loose ends, many loose ends. Some few men in this country were not satisfied with these loose ends. Some of these had obsessive theories and tried to make the loose ends arrange themselves in such a way as to prove these theories. They do not count for anything. Others, however, with a great dedication to truth wherever it might lead them, have sought to resolve these loose ends for the sake of history and of truth. They have de-

voted themselves to gathering, sifting and re-examining evidence. They have sought to follow truth even when this has led them down roads that sickened and terrified them. Penn Jones belongs to this latter small group. Since that terrible day he has dedicated himself to resolving the riddle, and he has followed authentic leads, abandoned countless ones that turned out not to be authentic. Is it wise to do this? Is it wise to lift the lid from a mystery and risk releasing a stench such as the world has never known, a stench that might well damage the world? Some men have the faith that truth is the ultimate wisdom. It is a faith that can hardly be faulted. Penn Jones is moved by that faith. He is also moved by a profound sense of responsibility toward his country, toward truth, and toward evidence. The truth risks being unspeakably ugly in this instance and at this point in its unfoldment. If, however, all the evidence should ultimately lead by miracle to some simple and benign solution, the man heaving the greatest sigh of relief would be Penn Jones.