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J.L. SIMMONS

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GF.

- Dallas policeman. And we ran around behind the fence - and it took us a while, a few seconds, to get around there. And when we got around there, there was no one there. There was mud on the two by four railing by the fence as though some one had been standing on it .

Q. Were you questioned by any local <sup>police</sup> authorities on the day of the assassination?

A. Why, yes, I was. I was questioned by the Dallas police.

Q. And did you tell them what you just told us now?

A. Yeah Yes, sir.

Q. Were you ever questioned by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation?

A. About a month after the assassination I was questioned by the FBI.

Q. Did you tell them what you told the Dallas police and what you told me?

A. Yes, I told them the same thing?

Q. Were you ever called as a witness by the Warren Commission?

A. No, sir, I wasn't.

Reel 19 Take 79

We are in Mesquite, Texas, in the home of James Leon Simmons, <sup>a</sup> car inspector for the Union Terminal Railroad.

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

We are in Mesquite, Texas, in the home of James Leon Simmons, a car inspector for the Union Terminal Railroad.

Q. Mr. Simmons, how long have you been employed by the Union Terminal?

A. I've been employed by the Union Terminal eleven years.

Q. Were you a witness to the assassination of President Kennedy?

A. Yes I was. I was standing on the Elm Street Overpass at the time of the assassination.

Q. Were you <sup>there</sup> alone ~~there~~ or with others?

A. Uh - there was a group of employees from the Union Terminal at the time, and two Dallas policemen.

Q. What did you see and what did you hear when the assassination took place?

A. As the limousine ~~passed~~ rounded the curve on Elm Street there was a loud explosion - seemed to be from fireworks or gunshot - didn't know which at the time. But it seemed like it came from the fence to the left and in front of us.

Q. Would you indicate ..... (cut-off)

Reel 19 Take 80

Q. Mr. Simmons, what did you see and what did you hear?

A. As the Presidential limousine was rounding the curve on Elm Street there was a loud explosion. At the time I didn't know what it was but it sounded like a loud fire-cracker or a gunshot and it sounded like it came from the left and in front of us towards the wooden fence, and there was a puff of



smoke that came underneath the trees - on the embankment.

Q. Where was the puff of smoke, Mr. Simmons, in relation to the wooden fence?

A. It was right directly in front of the wooden fence.

Q. I show you a picture, ~~as~~ published by the Warren Commission as Exhibit No. 22<sup>15</sup>, which is a view of the Triple Underpass area and ask if you'd be good enough to mark with this pen with an "x" the area where you thought the shots came from - where you saw the smoke.

A. It was this area here.

Q. After you heard the shots and saw the smoke, what did you do?

A. I was talking with Patrolman Foster at the time, and as soon as we heard the shots, we ran around to the wooden fence, and when we got there, there was no one there, but there was footprints in the mud around the fence and there was footprints on the wooden two by four railing on the fence.

Q. Were you questioned by the Dallas police on that day?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Did you give your name to the Dallas police?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Did you tell them what you've just told me?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Were you subsequently questioned by agents of the Federal

Bureau of Investigation?

A. About a month later I was questioned by the FBI.

Q. Did you tell them what you told me and what you told the Dallas police?

A. Yes I did.

Q. Were you ever called as a witness by the Warren Commission?

A. No, sir, I wasn't.

Q. This is the Warren Commission Report. The back of it has an index of every person who is referred to by the Commission. Is your name present there?

A. No, sir, it isn't.

Q. Do you think it is rather curious that you had such a fine view of the whole Dealey Plaza area, and you were among those who saw smoke beh--- coming from - evidently ~~from~~ behind the fence and yet you were not called by the Commission as a witness.

A. Well, I always thought it peculiar but I thought that's the way they did business. (laughter)

( I'm asking questions, but ~~xxxx~~ don't answer them. Most people can't resist it ..... ) background technical talk.

Reel 19      Take 81

Q. Mr. Simmons, were you a witness to the assassination?  
What did you see, and what did you hear? (Repeat) What



did you see and what did you hear? What did you do then? (Repeat) What did you do then? Were you questioned by the Dallas police on November 22? Were you subsequently questioned by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation? Were you ever called as a witness by the Warren Commission? Since you had such an excellent view of Dealey Plaza and a rather definite impression as to where the shots came from and a distinct impression as to where you saw the smoke, do you think it was rather curious that the Commission, seeking to secure all of the information about the assassination, neglected to call you as a witness?

(background technical conversation)

~~Was asked to the Commission for the Dealey Plaza~~