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SUBJECTS:

CURRY JESSIE E.
DALLAS, TX
RUBY, JACK; BACKGROUND: FAMILIARITY WITH THE
POLICE
OSWALD, LEE; MURDER BY RUBY; TRANSFER TO COUNTY
JAIL
RUBY, JACK; BACKGROUND: BUSINESS & FINANCIAL
INTERESTS
GREEN, LOUIS

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INVESTIGATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Identifying Information:

Name Jessie E Curry

Date 5-6-78 10:45 AM.

Address 2508 LOVING

Place Regal Row - HOLIDAY INN. RM 118

City/State DALLAS, TEX

Telephone 214/327-6918

Date of Birth 10-3-1913

M or S married

Social Security 460 22 1916

Spouse Bessie Margaret

Children 4

2. Physical Description:

Height 6-1

Color Eyes Blue Hair Grey

Weight 225

Special Characteristics _____

Ethnic Group _____

3. Personal History:

a. Present Employment: semi retired - ^{self employed} investigative

Address home address

Telephone _____

b. Criminal Record

1. Arrests _____

2. Convictions _____

4. Additional Personal Information:

a. Relative(s): Name _____

Address _____

b. Area frequented: _____

c. Remarks: _____

Investigator JOSEPH J BASTERI -

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

Name Jessie Curry Date 5-6-78 Time 10:45 A.M
 Address 2508 Loving Place Holiday Inn - Regal Row
Dallas, Texas Room #118

Interview:

Staff Investigators Joseph J. Basteri and Albert Maxwell interviewed Jessie E. Curry who on November 22, 1963 was Chief of Police of the Dallas Police Dept. and commanded a force of 1800 men. Curry entered the department in 1936 and rose up through the ranks to Chief of Police in 1959. He retired in 1966 because of poor health.

Chief Curry gave us a brief history of the conditions that existed in Dallas in prior years. The year 1936 was the Centennial Year for Dallas and the town was wide open. It remained that way until 1945 when Chief Carl Hanson took over the reigns of the department and Will Wilson was elected the District attorney. They and the city officials decided to clean up the city and by 1948 Dallas was a clean city and remained that way to present time.

Chief Curry had not known Ruby and had only one contact with him--and that was when he rejected a renewal of his license for a club that Ruby had owned on Ervay Street. Curry did not

Interviewer Signature


Typed Signature Joseph J. Basteri and Albert MaxwellDate transcribed 5/17/78By: CS Form #4-A

recall the Club's name or what year this incident occurred. The license was rejected because this club had excess arrests for drunks and fights. Ruby had called Curry in an effort to convince him that his Club had no more fights than other night clubs in Dallas. Chief Curry was of the opinion that this call did not alter his decision to suspend the license for a certain period of time--Curry always followed a recommendation of the Vice Squad in these matters.

Curry was quite certain that Ruby was never a registered informant with his department. He remarked that it was quite possible that Ruby may have had a detective friend that he was giving information to. As far as any allegations that Ruby had access to DPD files, Curry termed this as absolutely ridiculous.

In the area of organized crime, Curry said that this never existed in Dallas. The only gang that he knew about was headed by Lois Green, a local man, and this was a loosely organized organization. This gang's criminal activity concentrated mostly on burglaries, gambling and safe cracking. This gang never tried to influence the DPD in any manner. Chief Curry had never heard Jack Ruby's name connected with the Lois Green gang. During his administration, the DPD was free from any political or outside pressure. Chief Curry stated that when he became Chief, the town was clean and the police department was free of corruption. He said that it remained that way until

the day he left office.

The large scale organized gambling that occurred was back in the mid-forties with Benny Binion and his group which included Harry Urban, Bob Minyard and Lotta Milk. He estimated the daily take for this policy operation, which was mostly among Blacks, to be about \$600 a day. Before this operation could spread any further they decided to put an end to it. Most of these men were eventually run out of town. Whenever his department had received word that a member of any so-called organized crime figure was in town, he would immediately dispatch a police officer to inform this person that he was not welcome in Dallas.

Chief Curry stated that there were never any intelligence files missing, he never heard of any such rumors nor had he ever conducted any investigation to recover any such missing documents.

It never came to Chief Curry's attention of any unusual activity of police officers frequenting any of Ruby's clubs. As far as any pay-offs of Ruby to Dallas police officers, Chief Curry thought that this was most unlikely because there was no need for Ruby to pay any police officer. He imagined that Ruby may have bought an officer a drink or picked up a tab now and then, but that would be the extent of any payoffs. Curry is certain that no police officer worked in Ruby's Club because that was against police department regulations. He

suggested that perhaps Special Police officers may have worked for Ruby, as it was not against their regulations. These special police officers are not regular police officers and they did not come under his jurisdiction. Their sole function is to supervise dance halls.

The plans for the movement of Lee Harvey Oswald were formulated by Chief Curry, Captain Fritz, of Homicide, Chief Stevenson, head of Criminal Investigation, and Chief Lumpkin, who headed the Jails and Services Division. Curry informed us that no big plans were made, nor any official reports made, but they just sat down and verbally discussed what would be the best way to move LHO to insure his safety. Curry was aware that many threats were made against Oswald and a group, whom he could not identify, was attempting to seize him. These plans were made sometime on Saturday, November 23, 1963. There was never any decision made to move Oswald on Saturday evening.

Curry recalls a group of newsmen approaching him on Saturday and wanted to know if it was necessary for them to sleep there all night to insure that they would not miss viewing the movement of Oswald. Chief Curry stated that he told the news media that Oswald will be moved tomorrow morning and if they returned by 10 AM Sunday morning they would not miss anything. Chief Curry said that he was reluctant to have the newsmen present during Oswald's transfer but was concerned

about the adverse publicity his department would receive if the news media were excluded.

Chief Batchlor was in charge of the security in the basement and was instructed to thoroughly search the entire basement, including even the air conditioning ducts. Also, men were posted on all entrances of the building and basement to insure that no one but authorized personnel and the news media was allowed to enter. Also, there was a designated place for the news media to be placed and that was behind the railing separating the basement auto ramp from the garage. According to Curry, there was no possible way anyone could have known the exact hour that Oswald was to be moved, including Curry himself.

That Sunday morning, he called Captain Fritz and told him that whenever he was finished with the questioning of Oswald, they would set the plan of Oswald's movement in motion. No one was fully briefed on the entire transfer plan of LHO and about ten ranking offices knew only what their specific supervising duties were. Chief Curry then received a call from Captain Fritz informing him that he had completed the interrogation of LHO. Curry informed Fritz that he was going downstairs to check to see if the security was in order and that if he did not hear from him (Curry) in three or four minutes, to bring Oswald downstairs. As Curry proceeded to go downstairs

he received a call from Mayor Caball who was inquiring on the status of their plan. While on the phone with the Mayor, Captain Fritz evidently decided, not hearing from Chief Curry, that it was alright to bring Oswald downstairs--which he did. Minutes later Chief Curry was informed that Oswald had been shot. Chief Curry stated that had he gone downstairs and seen the reporters in areas off limits to them, he would have halted the entire transfer until they (reporters) were moved back into their designated area. Chief Curry could not conceive why Batchelor had permitted the news media to roam on off-limits areas.

Curry stated that he had a practice to always form a special squad to investigate any unusual incident. After the Oswald shooting he did just that and appointed Inspector J.H. Sawyer to head it. Chief Curry said that there were no ill feelings or dissension among any men in the department because of this unit. Also no pressure was exerted to disband the unit. It was disbanded when the investigation was fully completed. The purpose of this unit was to find out what caused the breakdown in security allowing LHO to be shot and who was responsible, if anyone, for any errors that may have occurred.

Chief Curry implied that he knew who made the mistake. He continued that the investigation disclosed that Police Officer Vaughn left his post to direct traffic in order that the decoy

police vehicle could leave the basement. Curry assumed that Vaughn took this action out of respect for Lt. Pierce, who was the driver. Curry stated that he never blamed Vaughn for this action nor did he think it advisable to single him out and bring him up on departmental charges. Curry felt if he did accuse Vaughn and single him out, then people would think that he had taken that action in order for the heat to be taken off himself. This special unit, Curry said, was terminated after it had conducted a full and thorough examination into the operation security of the transfer of LHO on Nov. 24, 1963. There was never any pressure brought to bear to disband this unit. After all the leads were checked into and there was nothing left to investigate, Captain Jones submitted a full and complete report to my office (Curry).

When asked if there existed an intelligence report on Ruby prior to his shooting of LHO, Chief Curry replied that he did not know of any such file on Ruby and furthermore he believed there would be no reason to keep such a file on Ruby because he was only a small time night club owner.

At no time was any pressure put on the Dallas Police Department by the FBI or any other governmental agencies, so stated Chief Curry. He has never seen or recalled any special orders by any governmental agencies governing any of his actions during the period of the Presidential assassination.

Chief Curry did mention that the only trouble that did arise with the FBI was when he released to the press the news that the FBI was aware of LHO's presence in the Dallas area. Several hours after making this statement, Curry received a phone call from Gordon Shanklin, who was the agent in charge of the Dallas office, suggesting that he retract this statement. Chief Curry said he never made the retraction because the statement was true (Note: for a full report on this incident see Interview Sheet #000813 by Gilbert and Moriarty dated 3/13/77.).

Chief Curry acknowledged knowing Joe Civello, Joe Campisi and John Grizzaffi, stating that he had gone to high school with all three of them. He characterized Joe Civello as being a businessman all his life (export and import) and having the reputation of being a mob figure because of the reputation of his father. Curry believes that Civello's father was active in organized crime years ago and Joe Civello became acquainted with many of these mobsters. He continued that Joe Campisi was never a gangster but had always been in the restaurant business. He described Campisi as a sportsman who liked to gamble but had nothing to do with any gambling syndicate. John Grizzaffi is a small time gambler who would love to be thought of as a big time hood.

Chief Curry was then asked about a Charles D. West who

was believed to be a Dallas detective and back in 1948 was shot by a Cuban because he had incurred a large gambling debt in Cuba. Curry recalls this person and also the incident but said that West was not a detective from the Dallas Police Department. Instead, he was head of security for the Murray Gin Company, whose president was a man by the name of Donough. Prior to that, West had been a Texas Highway Patrolman. Curry describes Donough as a person who loved women, gambling and drinking. It seems that during that period Donough had gone to New Orleans and met several girls who took him to Cuba. While in Cuba he lost and owed \$200,000 to \$300,000 in gambling. Consequently, they would not let him out of the country until West went down there and managed to get him out of Cuba. While West was in Florida, Cubans had come looking for him and shot him. West and Donough are now deceased.