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### TESTIMONY OF WELCOME EUGENE BARNETT

The testimony of Welcome Eugene Barnett was taken at 3:50 p.m., on July 23, 1964, in the office of the U.S. attorney, 301 Post Office Building, Bryan and Ervay Streets, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. LIEBELER. Before you sit down, will you raise your right hand? Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. BARNETT. I do.

Mr. LIEBELER. Please sit down. My name is Wesley J. Liebeler. I am an attorney for the President's Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy. I have been authorized to take your testimony by the Commission, pursuant to authority granted to it by Executive Order 11130 dated November 29, 1963, and joint resolution of Congress No. 137. Pursuant to the rules of the Commission governing the taking of testimony, you are entitled to have an attorney present if you want one, and you are entitled to 3 days' notice of the hearing. I know you did not get the 3 days' notice because of schedule difficulties that we had, and you were just advised of it this morning, I believe. I assume, however, that since you are here, that you are prepared to go ahead with your testimony without having an attorney.

Mr. BARNETT. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would you state your full name for the record?

Mr. BARNETT. Welcome Eugene Barnett.

Mr. LIEBELER. When and where were you born?

Mr. BARNETT. July 12, 1932, New Hope, Tex.

Mr. LIEBELER. You are apparently a uniformed officer of the Dallas Police Department, isn't that right?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. How long have you been in the Dallas police?

Mr. BARNETT. Eight and a half years.

Mr. LIEBELER. It is my understanding that you were assigned to the area of Elm and Houston Streets on November 22, 1963; is that correct?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Would you tell us how you received instructions to go there, when you received them, what you were told, and what happened? Would you tell us what happened on that day, in other words?

Mr. BARNETT. We made detail around 9 o'clock. We were instructed to be at our assignments at 10. We were given our assignments, each one was given an assignment, and I was told to watch the crowd, watch for people throwing stuff from the crowd at the President's party, to keep the traffic clear, and to stop the traffic when the President came by. Then when the President came by, I heard three shots.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now, going back, you got to the area around 10 o'clock; is that right?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Where did you go when you got there?

Mr. BARNETT. Well, there were three of us assigned to that one corner.

Mr. LIEBELER. Who were the other officers?

Mr. BARNETT. Who were the other officers?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mr. BARNETT. J. D. Smith, and another officer named Smith. I don't know his initials. E. L., I believe.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you divide your duties among yourselves when you got there, or had you been specifically instructed as to what each one was supposed to do?

Mr. BARNETT. We divided our duties.

Mr. LIEBELER. How did you do that?

Mr. BARNETT. Well, as best I remember, we each picked a corner and got on the corner. We were advised to stay on our corner, not to cross over to idly talk, but to stay on the corner and keep our eyes open and be ready.

Mr. LIEBELER. Which corner did you station yourself at? I have a picture here of an aerial view—you can sit down—Commission Exhibit No. 354.

Of course, you can recognize the intersection of Elm and Houston here in the left-hand upper portion of the picture; can you not?

Mr. BARNETT. I was right here.

Mr. LIEBELER. At No. 1?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you remain there at all times from 10 o'clock until the motorcade arrived?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes; well, of course, I was here until we got word to stop the traffic, and I stepped out of this position here. I had to stop traffic from Houston here and help the other officers stop it on Elm, and stop this traffic on this small street that goes in front of the Depository Building.

Mr. LIEBELER. When the motorcade actually came, you moved over pretty much into Houston Street?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. To stop the traffic that was coming?

Mr. BARNETT. South on Houston Street.

Mr. LIEBELER. South on Houston Street?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir; Elm Street is so wide, and I helped these officers here stop this traffic here.

Mr. LIEBELER. We have written the No. 4 on here before and it is kind of hard to read. You also helped to stop the traffic that was coming down here in the area of No. 4, which would have been the traffic on Elm Street?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir; I was standing right about this position right here.

Mr. LIEBELER. Right about No. 8?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now specifically, were you given any instructions when you left that morning when you made detail, to observe and scan the windows of the buildings around that area?

Mr. BARNETT. No, sir; we weren't, but that is just one thing you always do. It is understood that you have the buildings to watch.

Mr. LIEBELER. But there were no specific instructions given to any of the officers, so far as you know, when they left that morning, about watching the windows in the area?

Mr. BARNETT. I don't see any use in being instructed on that.

Mr. LIEBELER. Well, regardless of that fact—

Mr. BARNETT. There was no instructions; no.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now from where you were standing at position 1 prior to the motorcade's arrival, you were in a position to view the windows on the entire south side of the Texas School Book Depository Building; were you not?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you look up at those windows?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. How many times did you look up at those windows before the motorcade came? Can you tell us with what frequency?

Mr. BARNETT. I looked up twice. Maybe once at 11, probably a few minutes after 11—probably a few minutes after 11. It was raining part of the morning, and when I found out that the people in the building were going to come outside and watch the President, I looked up at the building, and then I looked at all the buildings, and there were no windows that I noticed open then. But after a few minutes before the President came by, I didn't look any more. I started watching the crowd.

Mr. LIEBELER. So just before the motorcade approached, you moved over and also stopped the automobile traffic and were observing the crowd, so you did not look at the windows on or about the time the motorcade came?

Mr. BARNETT. I couldn't. I was too busy. [Referring to picture.] I got this in the wrong place. It needs to be about this position right here, instead of here. I was right here. I got it too far, but I could see the President's car from the position I was, so I had to be right here [pointing].

Mr. LIEBELER. You are satisfied you were further out into the intersection?

Mr. BARNETT. Right there [indicating].

Mr. LIEBELER. [Marking]. In the general vicinity of No. 9?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir; the car passed within a few feet of me, and I was holding some people, or seeing that they stayed back, and one small boy started. I was afraid he was going to get too close and I stopped him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now the motorcade made the turn onto Elm Street from Houston Street, and you were standing at approximately in position No. 9, and you indicated before that you heard the shots fired; is that right?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. How many shots did you hear?

Mr. BARNETT. Three.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was there any echo in the area from where you were standing?

Mr. BARNETT. What do you mean by echo? You mean another sound besides the shots?

Mr. LIEBELER. Yes.

Mr. BARNETT. No; I didn't hear any echo. The whole sound echoed. The sound lingered, but as far as just two definite distinct sounds, when each shot was fired, that one sound would linger in the air, but there would be nothing else until the next shot.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you see any of the shots hit the President?

Mr. BARNETT. Well, when the first shot—I was looking at the President when the first shot was fired, and I thought I saw him slump down, but I am not sure, and I didn't look any more then. I thought he was ducking then.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now when you were standing up there in position No. 9, you were in a spot where you could look right down Elm Street and see the railroad tracks down here which pass over the triple underpass?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you see anybody on the railroad tracks?

Mr. BARNETT. One or two officers. Two officers, I believe.

Mr. LIEBELER. Was there anybody else, as far as you can recall?

Mr. BARNETT. That is all I saw.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you have an opinion when you heard the shots as to where they came from?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. What did you think about them?

Mr. BARNETT. When the first shot was fired, I thought it was a firecracker, and

I looked across the street. In fact, I scanned the whole area to see where people would jump or move or make some action.

Mr. LIEBELER. You couldn't tell specifically where it had come from?

Mr. BARNETT. Not the first one, but I thought it was a firecracker. But none of the people moved or took any action, whereas they would have if a firecracker went off. And when the second shot was fired, it sounded high. The sound of the second one seemed to me like it was coming from up high, and I looked up at the building and I saw nothing in the windows. In fact, I couldn't even see any windows at that time.

Mr. LIEBELER. In the Texas School Book Depository?

Mr. BARNETT. No, sir; because I was standing too close, was the reason. And I looked back again at the crowd, and the third shot was fired. And I looked up again, and I decided it had to be on top of that building. To me, it is the only place the sound could be coming from.

Mr. LIEBELER. What did you do when you concluded that the shots were coming from that building?

Mr. BARNETT. I ran to the back of the building.

Mr. LIEBELER. Ran down Houston Street?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. There is a door in the back of the Texas School Book Depository. Does it face on Houston or around the corner?

Mr. BARNETT. It is around the corner from Houston Street.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you go in the building?

Mr. BARNETT. No, sir; I didn't get close to it, because I was watching for a fire escape. If the man was on top, he would have to come down, and I was looking for a fire escape, and I didn't pay much attention to the door.

I was still watching the top of the building, and so far as I could see, the fire escape on the east side was the only escape down.

Mr. LIEBELER. Since you surmised that the shots had come from the building, you looked up and you didn't see any windows open. You thought they had been fired from the top of the building?

Mr. BARNETT. That's right.

Mr. LIEBELER. So you ran around here on Houston Street immediately to the east of the Texas School Book Depository Building and watched the fire escape?

Mr. BARNETT. I went 20 foot past the building still on Houston, looking up. I could see the whole back of the building and also the east side of the building.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you see anybody coming off the fire escape up there, or any movement on top of the building?

Mr. BARNETT. Not a thing.

Mr. LIEBELER. What did you do after you went around behind the building?

Mr. BARNETT. I looked behind the building and I saw officers searching the railroad cars. I looked around in front towards the front of the building and I saw officers going west.

Mr. LIEBELER. Going west down that little street there in front of the School Book Depository Building?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes; but there was no sign they were going into the building or watching the building, so I decided I was the only one watching the building. So since this was the only fire escape and there was officers down here watching this back door, I returned back around to the front to watch the front of the building and the fire escape. Then I decided maybe I had been wrong, so I saw the officers down here searching.

Mr. LIEBELER. You mean the officers went on down toward No. 5 on our Exhibit No. 354?

Mr. BARNETT. When I got to the front, some of the officers were coming back toward me, started back toward me.

Mr. LIEBELER. You were still back near the intersection of Elm and Houston?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir; I was back where No. 8 is then. That was probably 2½ minutes after the last shot was fired. About that time, my sergeant came up from this way, from the north of Houston Street and asked me to get the name of that building. I broke and ran to the front and got the name of it. There were people going in and out at that time. I ran back and told him the name of it, and about that time a construction worker ran from this southwest

corner of the intersection up to me and said, "I was standing over there and saw the man in the window with the rifle." He and I and the sergeant all three broke and ran for the door. I kept the man there with me. The sergeant ran to the back to make sure it was covered. I kept the man there until they took him across the street to the courthouse. I was there until 3 o'clock, at the door there with one of the other officers, J. D. Smith.

Mr. LIEBELER. You didn't actually go into the building at the time?

Mr. BARNETT. No.

Mr. LIEBELER. How long do you think it was from the time the last shot was fired until the time you were at the front door keeping people from going in and out?

Mr. BARNETT. It was around 2½ minutes. Maybe between 2½ or 3 minutes.

Mr. LIEBELER. From the time the last shot was fired until the time you were standing at that front door?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you let anybody out of the building after you got there?

Mr. BARNETT. No, sir; until they were authorized.

Mr. LIEBELER. Who was in a position to authorize people to come in and out?

Mr. BARNETT. Well, of course, for sometime no one left except city, county, and Federal officers, and then after the people in the building were took into the small room there and questioned, they were brought to the door by a lieutenant, which I don't remember his name, but that was sometime after, and he brought them to the door and told us to let them out.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now, it was possible that people could have left the building between the time the last shot was fired and the time you and Officer Smith stationed yourselves there?

Mr. BARNETT. When I went to the door to get the name of the building, there were people going in and out then.

Mr. LIEBELER. There were?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Do you think it was as quickly as 2½ minutes from the time the last shot was fired until the time you got to the front door? Do you think it was that quick?

Mr. BARNETT. I believe it was 2½ minutes probably from the time I ran from the back to the front. That was probably 2½ minutes. Then it took me 20 or 30 more seconds before I got to the front there.

Mr. LIEBELER. So your recollection is that it was fairly short order that you got to the front door?

Mr. BARNETT. Three minutes at the most.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now who was the one sergeant who instructed you to post yourself there at the door, or was it somebody else?

Mr. BARNETT. Sergeant Howard.

Mr. LIEBELER. You remained there at the door for how long?

Mr. BARNETT. Until 3 o'clock. Close to 11:30 to 3—close to 12:30 to 3.

Mr. LIEBELER. At which time you were relieved from duty?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir; from that position I had to go back to my regular assignment at Commerce and Akard.

Mr. LIEBELER. Did you notice Oswald around that area at anytime?

Mr. BARNETT. No, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Later on you saw his picture in the paper and, of course, on television?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. You had no recollection of seeing him in the area at all?

Mr. BARNETT. None whatsoever. There were hundreds of people in that intersection.

Mr. LIEBELER. Have you ever talked to any other officer in the department that remembers seeing him in the area at all?

Mr. BARNETT. No; I haven't.

Mr. LIEBELER. Have you heard of anybody that saw him there at the time?

Mr. BARNETT. Well, of course, I heard other officers that went up in the building and talked to him.

Mr. LIEBELER. Officer Baker was one?

Mr. BARNETT. I haven't talked to the officer.

Mr. LIEBELER. So you were pretty sure fairly quickly that the shots had come from the Texas School Book Depository?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. There was no notion in your mind that they could have come from these railroad tracks down here around the triple underpass?

Mr. BARNETT. To me, it is impossible.

Mr. LIEBELER. From the sound of the shots?

Mr. BARNETT. The sounds were high, and if it was down here, it wouldn't echo. It would be a low sound. For a shot to echo, it has to be high up.

Mr. LIEBELER. You mean to hang?

Mr. BARNETT. To hang like that.

Mr. LIEBELER. Now there were altogether three policemen assigned to the corner of Elm and Houston; is that right?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir.

Mr. LIEBELER. Were there any other men assigned down the length of Elm Street here, that you know?

Mr. BARNETT. Not that I know of. There were no men stationed permanently there.

Mr. LIEBELER. The responsibility of control in that area would have been the job of the motorcycle riders and the Secret Service men?

Mr. BARNETT. That's right.

Mr. LIEBELER. Are there any general orders that are issued to police officers in regard to the scanning of windows when motorcades go by and that sort of thing?

Mr. BARNETT. Well, in our training, we are told to scan windows, among lots of things. Look on top of buildings, windows, cars, but, of course, these things you are taught from the beginning. You don't have to be reminded of it every day. That is what you are taught to do, and it would take too long to remind us of everything they are supposed to do.

Mr. LIEBELER. Every time you went out on an assignment?

Mr. BARNETT. Yes, sir; it would be impossible. That is why you are trained for a job.

Mr. LIEBELER. Can you think of anything else that you saw or heard on that day that you haven't told us about now, that you think we would be interested in?

Mr. BARNETT. No, sir; I believe that is all.

Mr. LIEBELER. Thank you very much, officer, for coming in. We appreciate your cooperation.

Mr. BARNETT. You are welcome.

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