

JFK Assassination Witnesses

Elm Street Witness recollections as to the Position of President when First Shot Heard

Jean Newman (opposite JFK at about z190)

Nov. 22/63 statement 19 H 489

"I was standing right on this side of the Stemmons Freeway sign, about half-way between the sign and the edge of the building on the corner.... The motorcade had just passed me when I heard something that I thought was a firecracker at first, and the President had just passed me because after he had just passed there was a loud report.

Billie Clay 22 H 641(statement to FBI dated March 23, 1964)

"At approximately 12:15 PM on November 22, 1963 I left the Depository Building and took up a position along the parade route on Elm Street about 150 feet west from the Depository Building entrance and viewed the Presidential Motorcade in company with Mrs. Mary Lee Williams, Miss Georgia Ruth Hendrix and Mrs. Sue Dickerson, all employees of Allyn-Bacon, Inc., Dallas, Texas. Also in our group was Mrs. John Hawkins, wife of an agent for Allyn-Bacon, Inc. and her son John, age 4."

"Just a few seconds after the car in which President John F. Kennedy was riding passed the position where I was standing, I heard a shot. At first I thought it might be a firecracker or a motorcycle backfire, but when I heard the second and third shots I knew someone was shooting at the President. I did not know if the President had been hit, but I knew something was wrong. At this point the car President Kennedy was in slowed and I, along with others, moved toward the President's car. As we neared the car it sped off."

Victoria Adams 22 H 632 (statement to FBI dated March 23, 1964)

I was in my office and I went to the sixth window from the left to catch the Presidential motorcade. Also viewing the parade with me were Elsie Dorman, Sandra Styles and Dorothy Garner, all employees of the Scott, Foresman and Company .

"Just after the car carrying President John F. Kennedy had passed on the street below, I heard three loud reports which I first thought were firecrackers . But, when I saw all of the confusion on the street below I knew they must have been shots. After the third shot I observed the car carrying President Kennedy speed away."

Georgia Hendrix 22 H 649 (statement to FBI dated March 24, 1964)

(Same position as described by Billie Clay - 150 feet from TSBD entrance).

"I recall that just seconds after the car in which President John F. Kennedy was riding passed the position where I was standing, I heard a shot. At first I thought it was a salute to the President, but when the second shot was fired and I saw the President fall down in the car I knew someone was shooting at him."

Sue Dickerson 22 H 644 (statement to FBI dated March 19, 1964):

"On November 22, 1963, at the time President John F. Kennedy was assassinated I was standing at the curb on the north side of Elm Street about equal distance between the point where the President was shot and the west end of the Texas School Book Depository building. I was with Mrs. Billie Clay, who is also employed with Allyn and Bacon, Inc. Mrs. Clay was on my right as best I can recall. "

Mrs. Peggy Hawkins CD897 (statement to FBI dated April 1, 1964):

"Mrs. Hawkins said that the car containing the Presidential party had just passed in front of the building shortly after noon when she heard two or three shots fired in the near vicinity.

... She said that she was looking at the President's car at the time and saw the President straighten up in the back seat and then slump over on his side. She stated she was aware that the President had been shot and was concerned for her own safety and that of her small child who was with her. She estimated that the President's car was less than fifty feet away from her when he was shot, that the car slowed down almost coming to a full stop and then started off again.

Dorothy Garner 22 H 648 (statement to FBI dated March 20, 1964):

"On November 22, 1963, at the moment of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, I was seated at a desk in the fourth floor offices of Scott, Foresman and Company and was watching the Presidential Motorcade through a window located on the south side of the Texas School Book Depository building and I know this window to be the fifth window from the east end of the building. I recall that Mrs. Elsie Dorman was sitting next to me at that time looking out the sixth window and that Victoria Adams and Sandra Styles were both standing next to Mrs. Dorman and myself looking out the fifth and sixth windows. Styles, Adams and Dorman are all likewise employees of Scott, Foresman and Company."

"I recall that moments following the passing of the Presidential car I heard three loud reports which I first thought to be fireworks but only seconds later realized something had happened on the street below although at the time of the shots, the

Presidential car was out of view behind a tree. I thought at the time the shots or reports came from a point to the west of the building.”

Mrs. Karan Hicks 22 H 650 (statement to FBI dated March 20, 1964):

“On November 22, 1963 I left my office about 11:30 A.M. to see the Presidential Motorcade which was to pass along Elm Street in front of the building. I was with Mrs. Gloria Calvery, Apt. 120, 1023 Hurwitz Rd., Irving, Texas, Mrs. Carol Read, 6428 Silvery Moon Drive, Dallas, Texas and Miss Karen Westbrook, 6606 Atha Drive, Dallas, Texas. We walked to Elm street and stopped at a point on the north edge of Elm Street about halfway between Houston Street and the Triple Underpass. We were standing at this point when President John F. Kennedy was shot. The car he was in was almost directly in front of where I was standing when I heard the first explosion. I did not immediately recognize this sound as a gunshot.”

Carol Reed 22 H 668 (statement to FBI dated March 19, 1964):

"At the time President Kennedy was shot I was standing on the curb of Elm Street about mid-way between the Texas School Book Depository Building and the Elm Street Railroad overpass. I was with Mrs. Karan Hicks, 926 North Marsalis, Apt. N, Dallas; Miss Karen Westbrook, 6606 Atha, Dallas ; and Mrs. Gloria Calvary, 1023 Hurwitz, Apt. 120, Irving, Texas, at the time the President was shot.”

Mrs. Gloria Calvary 22 H 638 (statement to FBI dated March 19, 1964):

“We walked to Elm Street and stopped at a point on the north side of Elm Street about halfway between Houston Street and the Triple Underpass. We were standing at this point when President John F. Kennedy was shot. The car he was in was almost directly in front of where I was standing when I heard the first shot.”

Karen Westbrook 22 H 679 (statement to FBI dated March 18, 1964):

“We walked to Elm Street and stopped at a point on the north edge of Elm Street about halfway between Houston Street and the Triple Underpass. We were standing at this point when President John F. Kennedy was shot. The car he was in was almost directly in front of where I was standing when I heard the first explosion. I did not immediately recognize this sound as a gun shot.”

Jane Berry FBI statement November 24, 1963 - HSCA Reference Collection CD5

At approximately 12:40 p.m. on November 22, 1963, she was standing just west of the building, watching a parade in which President John F. Kennedy was riding. Just as the car was passing by her, she heard a rifle shot

Mrs. Delores Kounas 22 H 659 (statement to FBI dated March 23, 1964):

“I was accompanied by Mrs. Roberta Parker and Mr. Lloyd Viles, both employees of McGraw-Hill and we took up a position along the parade route which I recall to be about fifteen feet west of the southwest corner of Elm and Houston Streets.”

“I recall that moments after the car bearing President John F. Kennedy passed my position, I heard a loud report which I first thought to be a firecracker. Following the second shot, however, I then heard screaming and saw people running and I then believed the reports I had heard were gunfire. Although I was across the street from the Depository building and was looking in the direction of the building as the motorcade passed and following the shots, I did not look up at the building as I had thought the shots came from a westerly direction in the vicinity of the viaduct.”

Mr. Danny Garcia Arce: 22 H 634 (statement to FBI dated March 18, 1964):

“When President John F. Kennedy was shot, I was standing on the grassy area directly in front of the Depository Building approximately thirty feet from the President's car. However, I could not see the President's car when the shots rang out.”

Outline summary of other witnesses:

- Hugh Betzner (after z186)
- Occupants of VP car (after z180. All occupants said the car had turned the corner and was going down Elm . It is still turning at z180) ¹

¹ In the VP car (4th in motorcade) which is just completing its turn at z180):

Hurchel Jacks (driver), WC 18 H 801, said "My car had just straightened up from making the left hand turn" when the first shot rang out.

SA Rufus Youngblood, WC 18 H 767, said that the VP car had turned the corner and he observed grassy area to his right before first shot was heard.

Vice-President Lyndon Johnson WC 5 H 562: said he heard the first shot "after we had proceeded a short way down Elm Street"

Lady Bird Johnson, WC 5 H 565: said "we were rounding a curve and going down a hill" when the first shot was heard.

Senator Ralph Yarborough WC 7 H 440: "as the motorcade went down the slope of Elm Street a rifle shot was heard by me".

- Occupants of VP followup car (after z191. All occupants said they were just making the turn - along side the TSBD. It is still pointing toward the TSBD a little at z191 when it is last seen)²
- Tina Towner (z191 to z227. According to her written statement provided to the 6th Floor Museum, the first shot was 4 - 6 seconds after she stopped filming. She stopped filming when the car was about 15 feet east of where it was when Zapruder started at z133. At a foot per frame, this puts the end of her film at virtual zframe 118. 4 seconds is z191 and 6 seconds is z227)
- Linda Willis (while JFK's car was between her and the Stemmons sign - z 190-210 by my geometry)
- Philip Willis (an instant before z202)
- Mary Woodward (at or after JFK turned forward after waving to them as he passed them. JFK turns forward at z198. Her placement of the first shot is supported by others near her such as Jane Berry, Gloria Calvery, Karen Westbrook as the location of the car when the first shot was heard)

These witnesses are also supported by others such as

² Occupants of the VP follow-up car (5th in motorcade) which is still turning at z191, described the moment of the first shot:

Joe Rich. (driver), WC 18 H 800: "I was staying right on his bumper" (of the VP car). "we turned off Houston Street onto Elm Street"

Clifton Carter, WC 7 H 474: "our car had just made the lefthand turn off Houston onto Elm Street and was right along side of the Texas School Book Depository Building"

SA Kivett, WC 8 H 778: "The motorcade was heading slightly downhill toward an underpass. As the motorcade was approximately 1/3 of the way to the underpass.."

SA Johns, WC 18 H 764: "at this time were were on a slight downhill curve to the right"

SA Taylor, (18 H 782): "our automobile had just turned a corner"

Occupants of Mayor Cabell's car (6th in motorcade) behind the VP followup car, recalled hearing the first shot as follows:

Milton Wright (driver), WC18 H 802: "had just turned onto Elm Street and approximately 30 feet from the intersection" [note: the turn onto Elm begins before the streets intersect due to the greater than 90 degree angle turn at Elm].

Earle Cabell, WC 7 H 479, said that he was turned around talking to Rep. Roberts and Mrs. Cabell with the TSBD situated to his back.

Mrs. Cabell, WC 7 H 486, "we were making the turn" ... "I was directly facing [the TSBD]"

[Rep. Ray Roberts did not provide any statement.]

- Hugh Brennan (when the limo was opposite the last window on the TSBD - z190-205),
- TE Moore (when the limo was opposite the Thornton Freeway sign - z200, same position as Mary Woodward),
- Wm Greer (when the car was almost past the west edge of the TSBD - z190-205).

There is no witness that puts the first shot earlier than Hugh Betzner (after z186).