

### Oral History Collection

### Transcript: BUELL WESLEY FRAZIER, INTERVIEW 1 of 2

Interview Date: 6/19/2002

# Interview Conducted By: GARY MACK with STEPHEN FAGIN and DAVE PERRY

The following interview is part of the Oral History Collection of The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. The Oral History Collection preserves personal recollections regarding the life, times, death, and legacy of President John F. Kennedy. The interviews also provide insight into the cultural history of Dallas and the impact of the assassination.

The Oral History Collection includes the memories of eyewitnesses, local law enforcement, local and national members of the media, civic and political leaders, White House officials, Kennedy family acquaintances, Dallas schoolchildren, filmmakers and researchers, Parkland Hospital personnel, and others related to the events of November 22, 1963. These candid and informal interviews provide future generations with a tangible link to the past.

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Oral History Interview

## **Buell Wesley Frazier** Interview One—June 19, 2002 By Gary Mack with Stephen Fagin and Dave Perry

Researchers Note: Buell Wesley Frazier recorded a second oral history with The Sixth Floor Museum on June 21, 2002.

Gary: (0:00:00) OK. This is Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. We're at Dave Perry's house in Grapevine, Texas, and Buell Frazier is our guest. I'm Gary Mack, the curator of The Sixth Floor Museum. With me is Stephen Fagin, our Oral History Coordinator. Buell, thank you very much for doing an oral history with us. And here we go!

Buell: (smiling) Well, thank you for inviting me.

Gary: All righty. Let's start at the very beginning, like, when you were born and raised and... and some family members and what brought you up to Dallas, Texas. Go! (chuckling)

Buell: First of all, I was born on June the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1944. I was born in a city called Highlands, Texas, which is located in Harris County. If you do not know where Harris County is—Houston. I'm sure everyone knows where Houston, Texas, is, and it's very close to Houston, Texas. I moved from there when I was just an infant, up north of Houston to Walker County, and the largest city in Walker County is Huntsville, Texas. And that's where I grew up and attended school there. That's... as a matter of fact, that's the only public schools I ever attended was in Huntsville. When I got out of high school a year—I moved up to Irving, Texas, and the reason I moved up there is that my older sister, Miss Randall, lived there with her husband and three small children. And I lived with them for a while while I was searching for work.

Gary: This was in 1963?

Buell: Yes, this was in 1963 that I moved up there, and I found work at Texas School Book Depository.

Gary: How'd you get that?

Buell: How did I get that? I got that... how I became employed there was that I had looked on my own, but I had gone to an employment agency. And through the employment agency, they set up an interview for me at Texas School Book Depository. I

talked with Mr. Roy S. Truly, and he turned me over to his assistant, which was Bill Shelley.

| Gary: at the Depository?      | OK, and do you remember approximately when you started work        |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Buell:<br>the summer of 1963. | I started there in the if my memory serves me correctly, it was in |
| Gary:<br>September?           | Can I jog your memory a little bit? Might it have been in          |
| Buell:                        | Could have been.   |
| Gary:                         | Could have been?   |
| Buell: started there?         | I'm not for sure (smiling). Are you aware of what day I actually   |

Gary: I remember September when I... because I read your Warren Commission testimony this morning, and I think you mentioned September. And I want to say it was around the 13<sup>th</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup> of September. What's important, though, is you were living with your sister and her family, and this was probably, what, a temporary arrangement or what?

Buell: Yes, it was a temporary arrangement. I was going to live with them until I found employment and I could move out on my own.

Gary: OK. And working in the Depository, what was your job title and what kind of work did you do there?

Buell: OK. Being employed by the Texas School Book Depository, I was employed as an order filler, and what I did there, I filled orders from different publishers. And by the way, if you're not familiar with Texas School Book Depository, we had several different stories that we stored our textbooks on. Different publishers, say, for instance, like Gregg was located on the fifth floor and then Scott Foresman was located on the sixth floor, and I could go from any floor from the basement up to the top and pull the orders as needed. Now, the Depository book building at that time, there was some floors that was strictly for administration and clerical type work, and that started, like, on the second floor. Second and third and fourth floor, I believe, had offices on it at that time.

Gary: So, when you and your coworkers got your orders for the day, you knew basically by the name of the publisher which floor to find those books on?

Buell: (nodding) Yes, that is correct.

# Gary: And how many people were working with you doing that kind of work?

It would be hard to say because... unless I actually had a list of Buell: (0:05:01) names to look at because we had some people was order fillers. Some were packers. We had one gentleman that he did the postage on the packages that would be going through the postal system. We had people that packed the small orders, as well as the larger orders that would be going by the freight lines. I would... I would really have to stop and sit down and maybe write names down and try to figure out how many people actually worked there, but in answer to your question, there wasn't that many people that did the order filling. There were some order fillers that were just primarily assigned to a certain publisher, and that's all they did. However, I was unfortunate... I was fortunate in that I learned quickly, and Mr. Shelley understand that and noticed that. So therefore, I was able to pull any publisher. If I had pulled all the orders out of my box, and by the way, he would take and separate them by publishers and put them in... we had an area in the warehouse where we'd go, and you'd pick up the orders. And if I had pulled all the orders at that time, I would ask him, "Well, what would you like for me to do now?" He said, "Well, just look and see who has the most orders and go over and help them." And that's what I would do.

Gary: How's your memory of the interior of the Book Depository building, especially the offices? Like, what colors were on the walls and the floors? Do you remember any part of that?

Buell: Not at this time because I did not go up into the offices very often. Occasionally, something would happen that I would have to take an order up to one of the young ladies that processed that publishers' orders, and I would ask for a clarification—something maybe that we had noticed from talking with my supervisor, Mr. Shelley. Sometimes, he might be busy or working on something else, and he'd say, "Well, just go up and ask this young lady because she was the one that actually initiated the order as it came from the customer, and she can probably answer our question." And... but I very seldom ever got to go up there, so I can't be specific. And I wouldn't want to tell you something that I... that I do not know.

| Gary:  | Your workday started at what time?                             |
|--------|--|
| Buell: | If my memory serves me correctly, it started at eight o'clock. |
| Gary:  | Uh-huh.  |
| Buell: | And we worked until, normally, I think it was five.            |
| Gary:  | And you'd get forty-five minutes or an hour for lunch?         |

Buell: If I remember correctly, we took thirty minutes for lunch and we had two fifteen-minute breaks. We had one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Gary: Your testimony to the Warren Commission mentioned that you would drive to work every morning and park in the parking lot that was north of the building. You know, that's one of the areas that there's hardly any information out there. One of the jobs The Sixth Floor Museum is responsible for is keeping an eye on Dealey Plaza and—because it's a National Historic Landmark District—to return the area as much to '63 as possible. So, if you can remember some things about, for example, the Depository warehouse that was a couple blocks north? There's hardly any documentation about that building. Did you work in there, in that part of it at all?

Buell: The building north of the building that everyone knows as the redbrick building that housed the Texas School Book Depository, there... right there at Houston and Elm...

Gary: Uh-huh.

Buell: (0:09:33) That's where I mainly was employed, and that's where I mainly worked. However, the building several blocks north of there was where... was what we called the State building, and it had copies, say for instance, of a textbook... would look identical to the one that we had up at the Texas School Book Depository. But it would have inside the book, it would have like a... it'd have a stamp in there. Now, I think they're actually self-adhesive labels they put in there that says, "Property of the State of Texas," and those textbooks were only shipped to schools in Texas because at time, we were a regional distribution point. We not only shipped to public schools and colleges in Texas, but we also shipped to New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

Gary: I was completely unaware of that. That's...

Buell: But...

Gary: ...good information.

Buell: But in answer to your question, I did work in the State building a couple of times—I think, two or three times in the afternoon just for extra. It was overtime work. Mr. Shelley asked me would I like to go down there and... and work for several hours, and I did that several times. But then after that, we had enough work up at our building that I didn't have to go down there.

Gary: There's a map in the Warren Commission exhibits that shows... that indicates that building was between what is now McKinney and Munger Avenue, but it also indicated that Houston Street went all the way through. And yet, when you look at the photographs, it doesn't look like Houston goes all the way through. So, what was between the State building and the Depository building? Buell: OK. What was in-between the State building and the Depository was actually a large rail yard that the railroad used, and there they would take and—it was a switching yard—they would put trains together there. They would... one would come in, and maybe they would drop a few cars off on a side track and... and they would pick up some. So, therefore, usually early in the morning when the time when I would arrive at work, shortly before eight, and I would walk up to the Texas School Book Depository, was... a lot of times I would observe the switching and the connecting of cars, which was very interesting to me.

#### Gary: You're a train buff, huh?

Buell: (smiling and nodding) Yes. I used to watch the trains when I was a little boy, going along the track, and I always wondered where they were going or where they had came from and... or what the contents of some of the cars were. And as I got older, I began to... I learned to tell the difference between a car that would be carrying new automobiles or one that would be carrying chemicals of some type. But it was always very interesting for me as a child, and at this time, I was just a very young boy. So, I was still very much interested in trains, fascinated by trains.

Gary: One of the Depository parking lots then was up by that State building, right?

Buell: That is true. Where I parked my car was actually just a very short distance. It was... the parking lot was actually at the back of the State building.

Gary: So, between the building and the Depository was... was rail yards (Buell nods). But was there any street there at all?

Buell: That area now where we're discussing and talking about has changed vastly because it has parking lots—paid parking lots—and so forth, and it's also a part of the West End, which, if you've been to Dallas, I'm sure that's one of the areas that maybe you've been to and visited... which is a large attraction to people that come to Dallas and especially if they're staying in one of the hotels closer to downtown Dallas. People often... you do not have to have a cab, but you can actually walk to the different restaurants and so forth in the West End. But to answer your question, there... there was a street that went down through there, but I... at this time, my... I do not have a map of the city of Dallas at that time showing the streets. But there were some streets down there because coming off of what we know now as Interstate 35, used to exit off there at Continental and you would come up... and if you do that today, you come up right into the heart of the West End.

Gary: Yeah, you actually come up onto McKinney.

Buell: (nodding) Yes.

Gary: Munger stops at where Houston Street is now. I don't know when you were there last, but they've now extended Houston all the way north.

Buell: Uh-huh.

Gary: But it wasn't that way back in '63...

Buell: Yeah.

Gary: ...and that's what confuses me that... because the State building had a Houston Street address, and yet I couldn't find any city maps that showed that there was actually a Houston Street by that building. But there must have been something. When you would walk to and from work everyday, were you actually walking across railroad tracks or was...

Buell: (0:15:33) (nodding) Yes, yes. Where a lot of the paid parking lot or facilities for parking your vehicle while visiting downtown Dallas or the West End... it was... it was just rail yard tracks—different tracks going in different directions there that they used to... say like, for instance, they would drop maybe two or three cars that was going to some of those buildings that's down now what is down in the West End because the... the Texas School Book Depository where I was employed, we... sometimes, we got railcars. It would come right up beside the building, and it would do the same down at the State building.

| Gary:  | So, the railcars would sometimes just drop off shipments of books? |
|--------|--|
| Buell: | (nodding) Yes.   |
| Gary:  | Right there at the back of the building?                           |
| Buell: | (nodding) Yes.   |
| Gary:  | OK. At some point after you got hired, you must have apparently    |

became aware that there might still be some openings, and you must have mentioned that to your sister?

Buell: Well...

Gary: Because she supposedly mentioned it to Ruth Paine, a friend of hers. Is that how you remember it?

Buell: Well, the way I remember it was that I was working quite a bit of overtime. Nearly everyday, we was working overtime. There would be some days that Mr. Shelley would give us a break, but my sister noticed that I was working a lot of overtime. And by the way, my sister's name was Mrs. Linnie Randall. She asked me, she said, "Are they doing any hiring?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. I'll have to ask

Mr. Shelley and see what he says." And so, I asked Mr. Shelley, I said, "Are we doing any hiring?" And he said, "Yes." He said, "We're taking applications." So, my sister used to meet with Ruth Paine and some of the women in the... right there in the immediate neighborhood, and they would get together sometimes in the morning and they would have coffee and some type of coffeecake or whatever they had. And they would sit around and visit and drink coffee or tea, and... and that's where my sister told Miss Paine that, yes, they were taking applications. And she, in return, Miss Paine told... there was a lady living with her at that time named Marina, and her husband was Lee Oswald. It was Marina Oswald. And so, she told Marina Oswald, and she, in turn, told Lee that he might go by there and fill out an application if he was still looking for work.

Gary: So, do you think that your sister asked you about employment as a result of talking to Marina, or is it something that she just knew from talking with you and then she told Marina?

Buell: Well, as the way I recalled, my sister asked me were they still doing any hiring, and in these meetings or gatherings that sometimes the women would do in the neighborhood, I guess something must have came up about Marina's husband looking for work. And that's when my sister asked me, and then I checked with Mr. Shelley. And he said, yes, they were, and the information got back to Marina and Lee through Miss Paine. And Lee came by and filled out an application.

Gary: So, when was the first time then that you actually heard of Lee Harvey Oswald? Not... not that you had seen him but had heard of him?

Buell: Right before he... he started to work there. My sister told me that Marina's husband was looking for work, but at that time, I couldn't tell you what his name was because I never had met the man.

Gary: So, when did his name... when did you first learn his name and that he was, in fact, going to be working at the Depository, or did you?

Buell: Well, the first day I met Lee Oswald was the day that he started work at Texas School Book Depository.

Gary:So, before that time, you had not even heard his name?Buell:No, I did not know his name or never had the opportunity to meethim.No

Gary: So, how did the meeting take place, and what did you think?

Buell: (0:20:17) Well, the... my first meeting with Lee Oswald was that he had reported to the Texas School Book Depository for work, and Mr. Truly summoned Mr. Shelley and told him... introduced him to Lee and told him he was there and to put him to work. And after talking with him a short time, Mr. Shelley asked that I come to his

office, and I did so. And when I reported to his office, he introduced me to Lee Oswald. And at that time, he told me that he would like for me to teach him to fill orders, and I did that.

Gary: What was your first impression of him?

Buell: My first impression of Lee... he was... he'd... he appeared to... and I later found out that he was a very quiet type person. He wasn't someone that talked excessively, and most of our conversations—as a matter of fact, all of our conversations—while working was strictly business. He'd ask me a question, how did I know the difference between... or what actual textbook was they... were they referring to, and I would show him the difference between one text and another. And I said, "When you see this, this is the copy that they're asking for right here." And he... he learned very quickly. Seemed to be quite intelligent, and it was a pleasure working with him because he never... he never just asked you a question... asked you a question. It was always... he was trying to find or understand. After reading the invoice that he had in his hand, if he had any question, he'd just come find me.

Gary: Did he talk about other things or any other things: sports or politics or anything, with you?

Buell: (shaking head) We never talked politics. The two things that I could get a response out of Lee—and this is especially when we were riding back and forth to Irving-there was two things that I could get a comment out of him was one about his child. At that time, he had a small daughter, and his wife, Marina, was pregnant with their second child. He wasn't a big talker. You would get a chuckle out of him when you asked something about the children. I guess he would think of something that'd happened, and he would say a sentence or two. And then the other thing was, a lot of times, we'd talk about the weather or something. If it looked like it was going to rain or something, I'd say, "It looks like we might get some rain today." And you'd get a few words out of him there. He wasn't one to initiate a conversation, but he would answer you. And talking about children, all the children in the neighborhood at that time that lived around there in that area, they all knew Lee because Lee played with the children a lot of times in the evening, late in the evening, in Miss Paine's front yard. I know my little nieces knew him. They knew who he was on sight when they saw him, that he was the man that lived at Miss Paine's. And he played with several children in the neighborhood along with his own child.

Gary: Did you meet Marina or the kids or Mrs. Paine at any time before the assassination?

Buell: (shaking head) No.

Gary: So, you... in riding back and forth, which we'll... we'll get to in just a minute, it was always Oswald coming over to your place?

Buell: Most of the time, yes, that's the way it is. Sometimes, I would... when we would be coming from Dallas, I would drop him in front of his house.

Gary: But you never stayed?

Buell: No, I never... I never went in. We never visited. I never went in, we visited, or sat down and have a soda or a cup of coffee. I never did that, or we never went together anywhere after work. Sometimes, I would let him out in front of his house because maybe I was... I'd have some errands to run. Maybe I was supposed to go by the store and pick up milk or bread or whatever my sister had asked me to bring that afternoon.

Gary: How did the riding back and forth come about?

Buell: (0:25:16) The way that came about was that, after learning that... that his wife lived with Marina out in Irving, and I asked him, I said, "Well, how do you get back and forth?" And he said, "Well," he says, "I usually go out and see my wife on the weekend." And I said, "Well, how do you get out there?" And he said, "Well," he says, "you know, bus... ride the bus or taxi. However I can get out there." And I told, I said, "Well, you know, I go back and forth everyday. Anytime you want to go over to see your wife," I said, "all you have to do is tell me during the day." And I said, "You can... you can ride out to Irving with me, and then if you spend the night, then you can ride back with me the next morning." And actually what eventually occurred on that was that he would ride out to Irving with me on Friday afternoon. I would drop him off, and then I would not see him again until Monday morning. And I know sometimes people might ask, "Well, did you ever go anywhere together or did you ever go to the movies or ballgames? Did you ever do anything together?" (shaking head) We never did.

Gary: Did he ever offer to buy your gas now and then?

Buell: No, because I never asked him because he... he lived like less than a half a block... his wife lived with Miss Paine less than a half a block from where I lived, and I was going there. So, I just always said to myself, well, it takes that much gas for me to go to work, why charge him? Now, some people would, but I'm not that type of person. If I'm going somewhere myself, why charge someone?

Gary: And he never volunteered, though, either, did he?

Buell: I think he may have asked a couple of times, and I told him it wasn't necessary. I think at first he did since you asked me the question. I think he did, and I told him, I said, "Well, that's not necessary."

Gary: Let's see. I'm reading my notes here, and I'm seeing that one of them doesn't make any sense to me now (chuckling). So, we'll skip right on by that!

Buell: (smiling) Well, we could always come back to that.

Gary: Well, that sounds like a good idea. Your regular routine started at eight o'clock, and when would you guys normally break for lunch? Noon or so or...?

Buell: I think it... I think it was 12:00 to 12:30.

Gary: OK. Where did you have your lunch normally?

Buell: I usually had my lunch there at the Texas School Book Depository because I usually carried my lunch. A few times, I did go down to a little diner that you could just go in and order and sit down. It was a little... which was now part of the West End. It was between the School Book Depository and the State building. There was a little diner there. You could get sandwiches and so forth, and a few times, I walked down there by myself and ate lunch there. But most of the time, I brought my lunch, and I would... some of the guys would eat their lunch out on the docks. Some would eat their lunch in the break room playing dominoes or cards. There was usually something going on all the time because some... some of the guys liked to play dominoes and different card games.

Gary: The break room was also known as the domino room, and that was on the first floor?

Buell: (nodding) Yes.

Gary: What part of the building—north, south, east, west?

Buell: OK. The break room was located over in the corner of the... it was the first floor. Like, if you'd walk up from outside and walk on the dock and walk into the first floor, it was in the corner, and it was to the left of Mr. Shelley's office. It was between Mr. Shelley's office and the men's restroom.

Gary: OK. So that would put it right by the northeast corner of the building.

Buell: (nodding) Yes.

Gary: OK, OK. I understand. And... and that's where most of you and your coworkers would eat your lunch? Would you guys go up to the second floor lunchroom at all?

Buell: (0:30:00) I did go up and eat my lunch there a couple of times, but the lunchroom was small. And we didn't have a lot of tables and chairs in there, and a lot of times, the women that worked in the different publishers' office was in there. And I didn't feel it was right to take a seat from someone that wanted to get away from their desk. We had a lot of places to sit down to eat downstairs. Sometimes, I used to eat up there on the first floor. Sometimes, I'd eat down in the basement because that's where I

kept my lunch. It was nice and cool down there, and sometimes, it was quiet. If I just wanted to have some quiet time—just eat my lunch and not talk to everyone, be eating my lunch, and just for a few minutes, just have, as I said—not to be repetitious—just quiet time to yourself. And then sometimes, I'd take a book, and I'd be looking at a book while I would be eating—something that I wanted to read in there. I often looked through the books. We had a lot of publishers for anything from kindergarten through college.

Gary: Unfortunately, there are very few photographs of the interior of the Book Depository, and of those, hardly any are color. Do you remember anything about the colors in the lunchroom?

Buell: (shaking head) No, I don't. Like I said, I only was up there a couple of times. I knew they had, like, a Coke machine, and I think they had a snack machine in there. And I'm not real... I can't think of much anything else in there that I can... that I can recall at this time. But it just had a few chairs in there and tables, but it was very, very small.

Gary: I'm going to ask you a question that's really obscure, but you know, if you don't know, that's fine. The soft drink machine was actually a Dr. Pepper machine. Now, my question is, what... did they just have Dr. Pepper or did it also have Cokes or Pepsis or other flavors in there?

Buell: To the best of my memory, there was... there was a variety of drinks in there.

Gary: OK. It's an obscure question, but it comes up now and then...

Buell: Sure.

Gary: ....so, I thought I'd ask. OK. I understand that there was a caterer who would come by in the mornings with lunch. Do you remember...?

Buell: (smiling) I'm glad you brought that up because I was just fixin' to tell you I had forgotten something.

Gary: Go!

Buell: Yes, there was a catering truck that used to come by on the morning break time, and some of the people that worked in the building—not only people in the warehouse but sometimes people from upstairs—would come down, and they would buy their lunch off of the catering truck, plus whatever they wanted if they wanted something for the break time.

Gary: OK. Do you remember the name of the catering service or who was the guy? And was it a white guy, a black guy, a woman?

Buell: I think over the period of time I worked there, I think, and I could be wrong about this, but I think there were several different people that worked for that one catering service. And if my memory serves me correctly, I think it was Industrial Catering Service. Now, you can check that out, but I think... and I think they may still be in business today.

Gary: OK.

Buell: I'm not real sure of the name, but it's something... seemed like it was Industrial.

Gary: That's pretty good going back almost thirty-nine years for something pretty... pretty insignificant. I appreciate your memory on that. OK. You drove Lee Harvey Oswald to and from Irving on a few occasions before the assassination, and that was always on a Friday...

| Buell:                                   | (nodding) Yes.   |
|--|--|
| Gary:                                    | and then he'd come back with you on Monday mornings.   |
| Buell:                                   | (nodding) Yes, that is correct.  |
| Gary:                                    | Did he ever bring his lunch with him on those Monday mornings?   |
| Buell:<br>the week, but maybe a<br>sure. | He may have, and then he may not have. I'm not sure about during<br>a couple of times, he might have brought his lunch. But I'm not real |
| Gary:                                    | Had you ever did you ever eat lunch with him?  |

Buell: (shaking head) No, no. As far as he and I sitting down, say, like at some place out on the... the first floor there and sitting down and eating lunch together, just he and I alone, no. I did eat lunch a couple of times in the break room with the guys playing cards and dominoes, and it was too noisy for me. That's why I often liked to just sit out on the dock or go down in the basement and eat my lunch for the quiet time.

Gary: Of the... of the crew that you were working with, did Oswald hang out with any... with you or any of the other guys more than anyone else?

Buell: (0:35:30) (shaking head) No, he really didn't. Lee... Lee tried to fit in, and he tried to mix in with... with the personnel that worked there in the warehouse. But no, he didn't hang with any one individual or group more than the others. He... even though he tried very hard to fit in, he didn't fit in very well with some of the other workers.

Gary: Why? Why do you think that is?

Buell: Well, because sometimes he would make a statement referring to something, and some of the people would laugh. And he asked about that one time. He said, "Why do they laugh at what I say?" And I said, "Well," I said, "possibly because they don't understand what you're saying." I said, "They talk and describe things different than you." And I said, "You talk on a little bit higher level." And I said, "It's very easy to make fun of someone when you don't really understand what they're saying." I said, "You take the... you take the spotlight off themselves, and they put it on you." And he made the remark one time, he said, "Well, you never do that with me." And I said, "No, I don't, because," I said, "I was taught better than that." I said, "You don't make fun of someone." I said, "If they say something you don't understand," I said, "you don't make them appear to be something wrong with them in any... or the way they said something." And one day, he had... he and I was talking, he said something. And a few minutes later, he caught me over, and I had a dictionary. And I was reading this dictionary (smiling), and he says... he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I'm looking up this word." I said, "You used this word in a sentence, and I wasn't quite sure of the meaning, the definition." And I said, "I was trying fit it in where I could understand it better." And then, that's when he made the remark that I just said, he said, "You never make fun of any comment I make."

Gary: So... so, I can understand, Oswald sometimes would... to use the phrase, he would talk over the heads of some of the... some of the guys he was working with, and they, in turn, would then make fun of him. And he didn't quite understand until you explained the facts of life to him about this?

| Buell: | (nodding) That is correct.                             |
|--------|--|
| Gary:  | So, this wasn't a black and white thing or             |
| Buell: | (shaking head) No.                                     |
| Gary:  | a rich and poor thing?                                 |
| Buell: | (shaking head) No. And                                 |
| Gary:  | Do you remember what it was that he was talking about? |

Buell: Well, sometimes... not anything in particular. Sometimes, it'd be just like, you would see something and I would see something and he would see something, or he'd read something in the paper or had seen something on television. And he would be describing, in his own words to the best of his ability, what he had seen, and then that would happen. But I think he tried very hard to mix in with the people, but as you said that... he didn't realize it but often, he talked over their head because he had... he had—whether it was through a... going to school or self-taught—his education was at a much higher level.

Gary: Were you aware that he was a high school dropout?

Buell: (shaking head) No, not at that time. Now, I have learned a lot of things, I have and read a lot of things, and I've been told a lot of things about Lee Oswald since November the  $22^{nd}$ , 1963, but to answer your question, no, he never gave me the impression that he was a high school dropout.

Gary: He was aware of current events, and he was aware of things going on in the world apparently?

Buell: (nodding) Yes, he was very knowledgeable.

Gary: When did you first learn that President Kennedy was coming to town? And then the follow-up, of course, would be when did you first realize that he was going to come right by your building?

Buell: (0:40:15) Well, I think it was a day or two before... just hearing people talk. They said that President Kennedy was going to be coming to Dallas, but that didn't... anything didn't register on me about that because presidents, say, visit cities in America and cities in other countries. That's a common... a pretty common thing for them. For one reason or another, they go there for business, whether it's political, whether campaigning, or they're trying to be a negotiator as a... in a peace-type situation, or whatever. A president of the United States traveling to different points in the world is very common, so him coming to Dallas, no. That didn't mean anything particular to me.

Gary: How about some of your coworkers? Was...?

Buell: Well, the morning, Friday, November the 22<sup>nd</sup>, it was, I think, around break time, they found out that... that the presidential parade was going to be coming by the Texas School Book Depository, Houston and Elm Street. And a lot of the people was very excited about that. They says, "Gosh," says, "we got a chance to see the president." And as they were talking, then they realized that he may come by before lunch break or after lunch break, and there's a possibility we wouldn't get a chance to see the parade. So, someone had gone to Mr. Shelley and asked, "Are we going to get to see the presidential parade?" And there was a... I guess he checked with Mr. Truly, and Mr. Truly checked with his bosses who were up in... on the second floor. And they come back with the reply that, yes, we would stop and everyone could see the presidential parade. And so, we continued to work, and then at a certain time, we stopped and everyone got ready to watch the parade.

Gary: The day before, Thursday, the 21<sup>st</sup>, Lee Harvey Oswald came to you and asked you what?

Buell: He asked me... I was... I was over in the area where we would bring the freight shipments down that would be carried out by the different freight lines, and I was filling an order and putting it together. And he asked me, he says, he said, "Can I ride home with you this afternoon?" And not thinking about what day it was, I said, "Sure." And then a few minutes later... I don't know whether it was due to I looked at the date on the invoice I was filling, and I said, "Today's not Thursday." So, when I saw him, I said, "Hey," I said, "today's not Friday. Today's Thursday." He said, "I know that." He said, "But," he said, "I need to go out to Irving," and he said that Marina had made him some curtains for his apartment. He stayed over in an apartment in Dallas during the week and would go home with me like on Friday. So, he was going out to pick up the curtain rods where he could hang the curtains in his apartment.

| Gary:                            | Marina had made some curtains for him?  |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Buell:                           | (nodding) Uh-huh.   |
| Gary:<br>rods or?                | Were the curtains ready, or was he just going to pick up the curtain                                |
| Buell:<br>he was going to get th | Well, from what the way he explained it, they were ready, and he curtain rods to hang the curtains. |
| Gary:                            | So, you thought, "OK?"  |
| Buell:                           | (nodding) Uh-huh.   |
| Gary:<br>that you guys would     | I think from your Warren Commission testimony, you indicated get off work at like 4:45 or so.       |
| Buell:                           | (nodding) That could be correct, you know.  |
| Gary:                            | OK. So you guys, did you walk together out to your car?   |
| Buell:                           | When we like on Friday afternoon?   |
| Gary:                            | No, on Thursday afternoon, the day before. Because I want you to                                    |

talk about taking Oswald back to Irving.

OK. I'm sure we did because that was the only way he was going Buell: (0:44:56) to get in the car with me to go home because it was, like I say, several hundred yards north of our building, and I would go down from the parking lot there. I would go around and go down that Continental Street to...

Gary: То...

Buell: ... what is now known as 35.

Gary: OK. Buell: Stemmons.

Gary: This will be a little thing also, but just... just see if I can tweak your memory a little bit. Do you remember what he was wearing? Was he in shirt sleeves or did he have a jacket on when you went to the car?

Buell: What he was actually wearing, no, I don't remember, but it was in November. So, the chances are, we were wearing jackets or long-sleeved shirts then, according to whatever someone wanted to wear.

Gary: Did he have anything with him? Was he carrying anything or were his hands empty or...?

Buell: Oh, I understand what you're saying. You're wanting to know if he carried anything from the Texas School Book Depository with him that day on Thursday home with him, and the answer is no.

| Gary:  | How certain are you?   |
|--|--|
| Buell:   | (nodding) Pretty certain.  |
| Gary:  | Didn't have a box or a package or anything?  |
| Buell:   | Not that I know of. I know he didn't have a box or a package.  |
| Gary:<br>and Lee?                              | What'd you guys talk about on the way home that afternoon, you   |
| Buell:<br>commute out to Irving<br>children.   | I really don't remember, but if we talked about anything on the g, it would have to be in something in reference probably to his                     |
| Gary:  | So, there wasn't any talk about Kennedy coming by tomorrow?  |
| Buell:<br>the parade route was p<br><i>The</i> | Oh, no. Now, I know that next day, Friday, November the 22 <sup>nd</sup> , published in, I think, all the papers: <i>The Dallas Morning News</i> and |
| Gary:  | Times Herald.  |

Buell: At that time, there was a *Dallas Times Herald*, which is no longer today. But they were both published in the papers, I believe.

Gary: OK. So, you and Oswald head back to Irving from the Depository on Thursday. You dropped him off at Ruth Paine's house, and that's the last time you saw him until the next morning?

| Buell: | (nodding) That is correct. |
|--------|----------------------------|
|--------|----------------------------|

Gary: So, he then came over to your house, or did you drive over to Paine's house to pick him up? How did that work?

Buell: What, do you mean on the Friday morning?

Gary: On Friday morning, uh-huh.

Buell: On the Friday morning, Lee came down to where I lived with my sister, and she lived on... I remember the street.

Gary: It'd be 5<sup>th</sup> Street and...

Buell: Yeah, on 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

Gary: ...the cross street was...

Buell: I think the number was 2439, I think. I could be wrong about the number, but I know it was on  $5^{th}$  Street. And they lived on... my sister lived on the corner. I'd have to go over there in that area to be specific about the house number and what the cross street was, but I do know where the house is.

Gary: Is it still there? Have you been by there?

Buell: I haven't been by there in several years, but the last time I was by there, the house was still there. And I got to go into the house. I explained to the lady who I was. I told her at one time—a long, long time ago—I used to live there, and so, she let me come in and look around the house. And when I got in... when you walk in off of the carport into, like, the living area and the kitchen combination there, I explained to her, I said, "Well, this wasn't here. This used to be in here." And I walked around and explained things, and before I even got down the hallway, I told her where the bathroom was and the bedrooms was. And she said, "Well, you remember this house very well." And I thanked her for letting me come in and look around. I said, "I know you didn't have to do that, but," I said, "I appreciate that." I said, "I spent a lot of time at this house at one time when I was a very young boy." And I said, "It means a lot to me, this house." (0:49:47) But as far as on Friday, November the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1963, Lee came down to the house, and the first time I noticed that he was already down to the house was that he was looking in one of the windows into the kitchen area. And my sister said, "Who's that?" And I says, "Oh, that's Lee." And so, he come round to the door like coming in the house, and I said, "Well, I'm just finishing up my breakfast." I said, "I'll..." And my sister was finishing my lunch. I said, "I'll be out in just a few minutes. I'm going to go brush my teeth, and I'll be on out." And I did. When I got out to the car, he was standing by the car, and we got in the car. And as I got in the car, I glanced over my shoulder, and

there was a package laying on the backseat. And I said, "What's that?" And he said, "Oh," he said, "that's the curtain rods I told you about." I said, "Oh, OK."

Gary: At that time of the morning, which I guess would be like 7:15, 7:30, because I know in your testimony you made it clear that you had to be at work by eight or so.

| Buell:                                     | (nodding) Yes.  |
|--|---|
| Gary:                                      | Was it raining?   |
| Buell:<br>overcast overcast of<br>the air. | That morning, as well as memory going back, it was kind of an day, and there was a little mist, a little fine, real pinpoint-type mist in |
| Gary:<br>assume?                           | So, you get in the car and Oswald gets in the front seat with you, I  |
| Buell:                                     | (nodding) Yes.  |
| Gary:                                      | And off you go, taking the same route that you normally did.  |
| Buell:                                     | Uh-huh.   |

Gary: Take Storey Road down to what is now called Airport Freeway and then into Stemmons and then to Continental and then into the parking lot. What was that ride like, and what kinds of things did Oswald talk about, if anything?

Buell: (0:52:04) Well, that morning on the way to work he was like no other. I mean, he was just the same he was any other time that he rode in with me on Monday morning. But today... this particular day, it was Friday. He was quiet. He was just watching the traffic, and... and I mentioned, I said, "Well," I said, "just kind of overcast and misty today." But later on, the mist stopped, and the... the sun broke through the clouds and it came out, and it was a real pretty, sun-shiny day.

| Gary:<br>Depository.            | That happened, though, after you had already gotten to the                             |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Buell:                          | (nodding) Yes, yes.  |
| Gary:<br>and forth, did you hav | On the way in let me back up a little bit. On these rides back ve a radio in your car? |
| Buell:                          | (nodding) We did.  |
| Gary:                           | Did you listen to the radio?   |

| Buell:  | Yeah, sometimes.  |  |
|---|---|--|
| Gary:<br>was?   | And did you have a favorite station? Do you remember what it  |  |
| Buell:  | (smiling) Yes.  |  |
| Gary:   | And it was?   |  |
| Buell: (smiling) WBAP. I think the it was 1480, I believe, was the<br>like nowadays, if you listen to a radio station say like FM, it's like 96.3 or 99.5. Both of<br>those are are country music stations. |   |  |
| Gary:<br>change with WFAA I   | 1480 was KBOX. WBAP was at 820 and 570. They used to Radio.   |  |
| Buell:  | OK. That sounds right.  |  |
| Gary:<br>Top to the Top 40  | Well, let me ask it this way then. Were you listening mostly to station or to a country western station?    |  |
| Buell:  | At that time, I I listened more to Top 40 stations.   |  |
| Gary:   | OK.   |  |
| Buell:<br>of music today. I enj   | I wasn't into country as much as I am today, but I listen to all types oy I enjoy different types of music. |  |
| Gary: Well, OK. Then if you were into Top 40 then, you were and you remember 1480, so you were probably listening to KBOX, K-B-O-X.   |   |  |
| Buell:  | That's it! I said WBAP, didn't I? (smiling)   |  |
| Gary:   | Uh-huh.   |  |
| Buell:  | OK.   |  |
| Gary:   | Just curious. Just curious.   |  |
| Buell:  | OK.   |  |
| Gary:   | The reason I ask, was there talk about President Kennedy coming   |  |

to Texas on the radio that morning?

Buell: That I don't remember because most of the time, it was mainly music that I listened to. I didn't listen too much... I wasn't too much into listening to the news like I am today (smiling). I listen to news a lot more than I do music, but at certain times of the day, I'm... if I'm riding along, I know where the dials to go to hear the most updated news. And I'll do that.

Gary: Well, what I'm getting at is, I'm trying to find out if there was anything about Oswald's demeanor that was different in any way from any of the other times you guys had gone back and forth?

Buell: No, I've been asked that.

Gary: I'm sure you have (chuckling).

Buell: (0:55:19) And I can't... I can't put my finger on any one thing because he was just... he was very quiet, and he very seldom ever initiated a statement. Usually, he would answer me something I had asked him, but no, there was no mention of the president coming to Dallas that day or anything.

Gary: So, as best as you can remember—and I know you've thought about this many times over the years—as best you can recall, this was a day like any other day as far as Lee Harvey Oswald was concerned? At least, as best you can tell?

Buell: (nodding) Yes. It was a... it was just like any other day. (phrase indecipherable) ...go to work. I knew it was Friday, and unless we was working Friday... and sometimes, we did work on Saturdays in heavy shipping season, but most of the time, you knew that you... when you got off that afternoon, you would be off until Monday morning. And it's no different today as it was in 1963. A lot of people look forward to Fridays. But whether anything was different about the way he acted or anything, no. I can't remember that at all because... except to answer that he was just... he appeared to be himself. But the thing that I know now that I didn't know at that time was that day, a young boy would leave and go to work (choking up), but he would... would return as a man.

Gary: When you arrived and you parked—you've told this part of the story many times—that you sat there and was revving... you were revving up the engine a bit to get the battery charged and all, and Oswald got out of the car. He must have reached into the backseat at some point and grabbed his package and off he went toward the Depository, and you saw him walking ahead of you. Was that different than his ordinary routine?

Buell: (nodding) We did walk together other occasions, but on that particular morning, we got there a little bit earlier, and the gauge on my vehicle I was driving at that time... I said, "Well, I'm just going to sit here for a few minutes and rev my engine up just a little bit and the needle (word indecipherable) would move and charge... charge my battery," because (chuckling) on this car that I was driving at the

time being, sometimes, when I would get down there—if we worked late, sometimes I'd get down there, it wouldn't start. I'd have to... I would have to have a jump. And sometimes, I would give a jump to someone else. Billy Lovelady and I, we often helped one another, and by the way, Billy Lovelady was employed there at the Texas School Book Depository. He... he did the receiving and shipping.

And he looked kind of like Oswald, didn't he?

Buell: Well, the only thing they have in common is they both have a high forehead. If you would put Lee Oswald beside Billy Lovelady, you would have a Mutt and Jeff team. One was slender, and the other, Billy Lovelady, was short and stocky, and their personalities were nothing alike. It was totally the opposite. Billy Lovelady was a... he was a big kidder (smiling)—a real happy-go-lucky guy. Lee was very quiet and observant.

Gary: Lee was about 5'9" or so. How tall was Billy?

Buell: I don't actually know how tall he was, but I would probably say Billy was probably maybe in the 5'2"/5'3" area. And I'm not sure about whether that's correct or not, but I... maybe 5'4" at the most probably.

Gary: I talked with Billy on the phone in 1980, I believe it was, maybe 1979... not too long before he died.

Buell: (nodding) Yes.

Gary:

Gary: And he told me a story, and—you know, I had a mutual acquaintance—and I don't know if this story is true or not, so let me run it by you and see if...

| Buell:   | OK. See if  |
|----------|---|
| Gary:    | see if this   |
| Buell:   | See if I can remember it or relate to it (smiling). |
| Gary:    | Yeah, but   |
| Stephen: | Gary, let me change tapes before you start that.    |
| Gary:    | Oh, OK.   |
| Stephen: | I've got about a minute left.                       |
| Gary:    | All right. Take a break!                            |

<break in tape>

Dave: ....Midlothian, let me tell you that right now.

Gary: OK. Here we go again. Break time is over. OK. The Billy Lovelady story, let's see what... let's see if this rings true for you. Billy told me that, yes, he was aware that there was a certain facial similarity between he and Oswald, and he said, "Gary, some of the guys in our crew purposely called Lee, 'Billy,' and they called me, 'Lee.'" And he said, "I thought it was funny as Hell, but Oswald didn't like it at all. It really got him hacked off (chuckling)." Does that ring a bell for you at all?

Buell: (1:01:11) The only thing I can remember about... I think I remember something similar to that, and... and the reason I can barely remember just a little bit because I wasn't present when a lot of it was going on. I happened to come over to the area where Billy was writing his freight bill of ladings, and something was said and people was laughing. And I turned around and said, "Well, what are they talking about?" (nodding) But that could very well be true.

Gary: But he was a short guy, you say? 5'2"/5'3"?

Buell: (nodding) Yes, yes.

Gary: So, these conspiracy theories that came up later that Lee Oswald was actually standing on the steps with you and the other guys is just silly, isn't it?

Buell: Yes, because you can't see me, but Billy... there's one photo that has often been discussed. It shows Billy Lovelady standing on the steps of the School Book Depository. Well, back in the shadow where you can't see me, I was standing back there. But... and I know that's Billy (smiling). And I've been asked about that photo. Do I know that individual, and I said, "Yes." As a matter of fact, I think the Warren Commission asked me about that... that photo, and I told them, I said, "Yes, that's Billy Lovelady." And they said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Yes." And they said, "Could it be Lee Oswald?" I said, "No way."

Gary: Some of the people who ask you this, I assume, are the Kennedy assassination researchers. When you tell them that, yes, that's Billy, what is their reaction?

Buell: Oh, they listen to what I have to say.

Gary: Uh-huh. Do they try and talk you out of it, or are they disappointed?

Buell: No. To me, there's no comparison. You could put a picture of Lee Oswald, which there is pictures of him after he was arrested and was in the Dallas Police

Department. You can take that photo or any other photo of him and put it beside a picture of Billy Lovelady, and you can quickly see you're talking about two individuals.

Gary: We've jumped ahead a little bit. Let's go back till just before the assassination. You talked about how Mr. Shelley, Mr. Truly said it would be OK to maybe adjust your schedule a little bit so that everybody could see the president if they wanted to. When was the last time that you saw Lee that morning?

Buell: It was sometime shortly before we was going to break for lunch and the parade. Exactly, you know, how many minutes or... I can't be specific. But it was a short time. It wasn't too long.

Gary: And did he say anything about wanting to see Kennedy or... did he say anything or did you just see him?

Buell: He never mentioned anything about... to me about, you know, the president. And actually, after the people that worked in the area I worked in in the warehouse there—filling or packing the orders or whatever—when they found out that we were going to get to stop and see the parade, there was often a lot of chatter. And a lot of people was excited about that.

| Gary:    | So, several of your coworkers expressed interest in seeing |
|----------|--|
| Kennedy? |  |

Buell: Oh, yes.

Gary: Do you remember which ones?

Buell: (1:05:20) I remember when I was over getting some orders out of the box, Lee Jarman told me, he says... he says, "We're going to get to stop and see the parade." And I says, "Well, that's nice." I says, "That'll be great." And different... different employees had different reactions, but everybody was excited because, to my knowledge, I don't know if any of them had ever had the occasion to see an American president himself. This would be my first.

Gary: So, you and some of the others decided that... I mean, you were all going to go out and see the president whether together or separately or whatever?

Buell: (nodding) Right.

Gary: So, where did you go, and how did you wind up where you were? You told us a little bit about it already.

Buell: OK. I was standing at the top of the steps, the entrance to the Texas School Book Depository. I was standing in the shadow because I was taller, so in order not to keep someone that was shorter than I from being able to see, I thought it'd be

a good idea that I was standing in the back. And the shorter people could stand on the steps, and everyone could see. And that worked out really well because I had seen pictures of the president and Jackie in, like, *Life* Magazine and so forth like that, and... and when they turned from Houston Street onto Elm there and started down to the Underpasses there, I... I remember, I remarked to myself, I said, "Well, they look just like they do in the pictures." And... and in my own way, I had my own photography.

Gary: Had you thought about bringing a camera?

Buell: (shaking head) No, because as I said earlier, I didn't even know... I wasn't aware that the parade was going to be coming by the School Book Depository, and at that time, I didn't even own a camera. So, it wouldn't of done any... it wouldn't done really me any good if I had thought about it because I didn't own one.

Gary: How 'bout some of the others from the Depository? Did anyone else have a camera that you know of?

Buell: Not that I know of, but maybe... maybe someone did. If it is, I'm not aware of it (shaking head).

Gary: So, you don't recall seeing anyone in the crowd immediately nearby having a camera?

Buell: Well, now, there was people there to watch the parade that had cameras but not anyone that I knew personally.

Gary: Did you see any cameras on your side of the street, you know, the Depository side?

Buell: Standing there on the steps, you could see people walking around trying to get the best position for the view, and there may have been some people on that side of the street that had cameras. But as I said earlier, not anyone I knew personally, so therefore, I wouldn't really say, "Well, there's Miss Smith," or "There's Joey," or something, "with a camera." Because I was just really excited to be able to... to actually watch the parade.

| Gary:  | You were standing on the top step then          |
|--------|---|
| Buell: | Yes.  |
| Gary:  | Or actually the landing part, I would guess.    |
| Buell: | Yes.  |
| Gary:  | Was there was there anyone back there with you? |

| Buell: (nodding) Yes, there was a lady that worked up in one of the offices, and I do not remember her name. |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Gary:  | Was she off to your right or off to your left?   |  |
| Buell:   | Left.  |  |
| Gary:  | To you left. Was there anyone with a camera up where you were?   |  |
| Buell:<br>didn't, you know v   | Not that I know of. Now, there could have, and maybe I just vasn't aware of it or didn't notice it. But not to my knowledge. |  |
| Gary:<br>front there with you?   | OK. So, you and and Billy Lovelady and who else was out in   |  |
| Buell:   | Bill Shelley.  |  |
| Gary:  | Bill Shelley.  |  |
| Buell:<br>Several of them was  | And there were some women that had worked in the offices there. there.   |  |
| Gary:  | None of the other order fillers were there with you?   |  |
| Buell:   | (shaking head) No.   |  |
| Gary:  | How long were you out there before Kennedy came by?  |  |
| Buell:   | Not very long.   |  |
| Gary:  | Five minutes or?   |  |
| Buell:   | I really can't be specific, but I know it was a short time.  |  |
| Gary:  | Did you remember—and I want you to be careful here that you're   |  |

Gary: Did you remember—and I want you to be careful here that you're not recalling something you've read about later on—did something happen in the Plaza shortly before Kennedy came by that was out of the ordinary?

Buell: (1:10:41) The only thing I can remember that I thought was a little unusual and maybe it wasn't, but it was a little unusual to me. But then, I just thought that the... the motorcycle policemen that were escorting the president's car, there was several of them, and they were... because they were getting pretty close to getting onto the freeway. And I don't know how long the... how many blocks they had gone in this parade, but they were... they were kind of clowning around, cutting their motorcycles on and off, to make them backfire and so forth. And I thought that was a little unusual, but then... now

that I've had time to think about it. But at the time being, it didn't... it didn't seem anything unusual to me.

Gary: So, this was before the shooting?

Buell: Yes.

Gary: And there are police motorcycles in the area...

Buell: Yes.

Gary: ...that may or may not have been part of the motorcade, and you heard them backfiring?

Buell: Yes. Now, the motorcycles that I heard... that I heard backfiring were motorcycle policemen. There wasn't any others, say, like someone... a spectator on a motorcycle.

Gary: OK.

Buell: No, there wasn't that. The only motorcycles that was actually running—and they were cutting 'em off and cutting 'em back on and making them backfire—was the policemen.

Gary: And... so, they were doing this on purpose. Why do you think they were doing that?

Buell: I have no idea.

Gary: OK. Do you remember a... an ambulance in Dealey Plaza before the motorcade came by?

Buell: (shaking head) No.

Gary: Have you heard about that since then? That an ambulance came by to pick up a guy?

Buell: You hear a lot of things, but I haven't heard anything about that.

Gary: OK. That's... that's an event where, if you have been there, if you had seen it, you probably would have remembered it. The ambulance was gone a good five minutes before Kennedy came by, so... so that means... that tells me that you probably didn't get out on the steps until about 12:25, and Kennedy came by at 12:30. So... OK. At some point, you must have become aware that the president's getting pretty close. I mean, I would assume you heard that the crowd... the crowd was cheering. I assume you could have heard some of that noise (Buell nods), and then finally, the

motorcade turned onto Houston Street and started coming up the street towards you. Take it from there! What can you... what do you remember, and what did you see? What did you hear?

Buell: The only thing I remember is... seeing that the... the car in which the president and his wife and John Connally and... and...

Gary: That'd be Nellie.

Buell: (1:13:44) ...was riding. I was just so captured by that because I had never gotten that close to an American president that I could actually see, and I was observing all the things right around the car in which he was riding. And that's about all. I... I was just watching. The people seemed to be very happy and very responsive before he got there, and then as all the waving and so forth that politicians do and people trying to get noticed, I guess I was just caught up in the moment at that time. And I was... I was so excited to be able to witness that.

Gary: So, the car is coming up Houston Street, and it makes a left-hand turn right in front of the Book Depository doorway. So, as you're looking straight out, the car's completing the turn (Buell nods). How long after the... the car completed the turn and started moving away from you did the first shot happen?

Buell: (1:15:01) It wasn't... it wasn't very long. I know there was a... there was a shot, and as I said earlier, from listening to the motorcycles that was leading the president's car—they had been backfiring—at first, I thought it was a backfire from a motorcycle.

Gary: So, it sounded pretty much like the backfires?

Buell: Yes, but then shortly after, well, there was two more. And by that time, there was really chaos. There was people running and everything, and you knew something wasn't right. From where I was sitting, you couldn't see because there was people standing out on the curb there to the street that was going down to the Underpass. So, therefore, I couldn't actually see what was going on in the president's car.

| Gary:  | Kennedy had actually dropped below? |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| Dually | (nodding) Vas                       |

Buell: (nodding) Yes.

Gary: OK.

Buell: And I couldn't see. My best shot of him... or my best view—let's rephrase that—my best view of he and Jackie and Governor Connally was when they made the turn because there was no one in front of us, and you had a very clear view. But after they passed and dropped out of sight, I couldn't see what was going on. All I...

all I... after I discovered that it was actually someone shooting, there was people running and falling down and there was just a mass confusion of what was going on.

Gary: What was your first realization that those were shots? Did someone say that, or did you figure that out yourself? Or...?

Buell: Well, by the time the... the second and third shot was fired, I realized that it wasn't motorcycle backfire because it has a different sound to me, and I realized someone was firing. And people was—as I said, in that whole area there—was running and falling down. You really couldn't tell at that time actually what was going on if you were standing in the position that I was standing.

Gary: And did you have any idea where the shooting was coming from?

Buell: The... the sound to me at that time, it sounded like it was coming... coming from above.

Gary: And... so, in other words, in the building?

Buell: Well, I was standing on the steps. It was somewhere... it sounded like it was coming from a building very... above. The one in which I was standing on the steps because if you go to that intersection there at Houston and Elm, there's buildings of a certain height in every... and... on three corners. And I don't... I do not know if the same effect of buildings like that present kind of like an echo effect. The... the only thing I can say was that I realized that it... that it was gunfire, but to be specific of which building it was coming from other than it sounded like it come from above where I was standing, I can't... I can't be more specific than that. And... and it sounded like it come from above of where we were... we were standing.

| Gary:                      | And you heard three shots?   |
|----------------------------|--|
| Buell:                     | (nodding) Yes.   |
| Gary:<br>or?               | Were they evenly spaced, or were some closer than the others   |
| Buell:<br>two was was much | I heard three shots. There was one, and then there was the other closer in succession (hitting knee twice with fist).                                    |
| Gary:                      | How many seconds do you think the shooting took altogether?  |
|                            | (shaking head) I don't know exact but probably I would<br>d this is probably. I don't know for a fact. I'd probably say all<br>a within fifteen seconds. |

Gary: And the last two were closer together than the first two?

Buell: (nodding) Yes. The first... there was the first one, and then the second and third one was... was just almost just back to back. It was very fast.

Gary:How much time then between the last two shots?Buell:I'd probably say maybe five seconds if it's that... if it's that long.Gary:Since then, of course, I'm sure you've heard that some people<br/>heard a different number of shots.Buell:(nodding) Yes.

Gary: Could there have been more than three, or could there have been fewer than three?

Buell: (1:20:16) Not fewer than three. Now, if someone... like I said, if you go to that area, and I'm not well versed enough to debate something on an echo or an acoustics type fact. But if two weapons fire at the same time—which would be hard to do but anything's possible, I guess—maybe there could have been more than three. But I know of three. I heard three.

Gary: I'm trying to... I'm trying to think of a way to figure out from where you were where... when the shooting actually started. When you stand in the doorway of the old Depository building today and you look straight out, almost directly ahead is that street light (Buell nods) or the... the traffic light.

Buell: Yes.

Gary: And... had the car gone very far? Where was the car in relation to that traffic light when the first shot was fired? Can you... can you explain it that way?

Buell: Well, it would be hard to pinpoint that because not knowing the speed of the car, but it wasn't very far after it dropped out of my sight.

Gary: Well, OK, maybe that's the way to do it then. The first shot... when the first shot was fired, you could not see the car at all at that point?

Buell: (shaking head) No, I couldn't see the car.

Gary: OK. Because the intersection there is kind of flat, and then it starts to go downhill.

Buell: It drops off rather quickly.

Gary: Yeah, so it was after the car had dropped down when the first shot was fired?

Buell: Like I said, the car was out of my... my view when the first shot was fired, and you had asked me earlier about how long did I think the... the three shots that I heard had taken. And I told you fifteen seconds. If you would take and fire a shot, say like, for instance, on the first second and then the second shot might not have been somewhere till like the eight to ten seconds. And then the... the third one on the... say like, somewhere between the ten and fifteen.

Gary: OK. What did you do next?

Buell: (1:23:03) Well, after the first shot and then with the second and third, I walked down on the steps to where Billy was originally standing because, if my memory serves correctly, Billy and Mr. Shelley had gone down the street that ran right in front of the Depository there. They had walked down there, and the lady I was standing by, we... we just stayed right there on the steps. And then people were... somebody come running by and said they'd shot the president. Well, by that time, it was really... really chaos, and I thought the best thing to do was just stay still and stay where somebody could see you because at that time, there was policemen all around and they had their weapons drawn. And I thought it'd be best just to stay still.

Gary: How long did you stay on the steps?

Buell: Oh, a few minutes, and I may have walked a short way down that street, you know, in front of the Texas School Book Depository.

Gary: I think it's usually referred to as the Elm Street Extension.

Buell: OK. Well, I may have walked a short distance down there, and then I... then I thought maybe it was best that I just turn around and go back to where I... where I was.

Gary: OK. Let me make sure I understand. You stayed, to the best of your memory, you stayed on the steps for two, three, maybe four minutes, something like that?

| Buell: | (nodding) Uh-huh.                                  |
|--------|--|
| Gary:  | At some point, though, you walked partly down that |
| Buell: | The extension street, yes.                         |
| Gary:  | street? OK.  |
| Buell: | Yeah, Elm Extension.                               |

Gary: And... and then you came back up the steps and... OK.

Buell: And we stood around there, and we talked for a little while. And then we went back inside the building.

Gary: When you say "we talked," I mean, you're talking about Bill Shelley? Was he still there or...?

Buell: (1:25:06) Bill Shelley and Billy were... they... they had gone further than I had gone on the street, and there were so many people running and everything, I lost them. I didn't know where they were. I would of probably have gone further if I had... if I could've seen Billy and Bill Shelley, but not being able to pick them out of the crowd, I just said, "Well, I'll just go on back to the steps." And I did that, and I stayed there, you know, a few minutes. And the lady I was standing by, I told her... she asked me, and I said, "Well, I don't know any more than I did before I went down there." And I said... and so, we back into the building and people that worked there began to come back in because there was... there was women that had worked there and... for the publisher. They were crying and everything about, you know, "They've shot the president," and so forth. And so, I realized that I hadn't eaten my lunch. Now, I know this may sound strange, but I... I was hungry. And being a young boy, you... you're usually hungry, so I went back into the building. And I had gone down to the basement, and I sat down and I was eating my lunch. And there was several plainclothes detectives, and I remember a policeman, a uniformed policeman, he came by and he asked me how long I had been there and had I seen anybody. And I said, "No, I haven't seen anybody unusual down here." I said, "I heard somebody over..." It was two ways you could go down into the basement. It was right there by a belt that went up to the meter where Junior had put the postage on the packages, and then over right by where Billy Lovelady would write up the freight bill of ladings, there was a... an entrance that you could down into the basement that way. It's a stairway.

Gary: Let's go back to the... to the steps and the doorway of the Depository. First of all, let me ask you, do you remember what kind of clothing you wore that day—what color, what kind of shirt did you have on? I'm asking because, you know, I'd like to be able to be able to find you in some of these early pictures of the Depository.

Buell: Probably had blue jeans and boots on, western boots. The shirt, I don't too much remember, but I know that day I had a jacket on.

| Gary:  | When you were outside?                                  |
|--------|---|
| Buell: | (nodding) Oh, yes, because it was it was cool that day. |
| Gary:  | OK.   |

| Gary:               | And what color was that?   |
|---------------------|--|
| Buell:<br>FFA.      | It was a dark blue, but on the back I think it was yellow writing of |
| Gary:               | FFA stands for?  |
| Buell:<br>I I came. | Future Farmers of America, and then it had the city from which       |
| Gary:               | OK. Did you see Lee Oswald at this time, after the assassination?    |
| Buell:              | (shaking head) No.   |
| Gary:               | Have you heard subsequently how he left the building?                |
|                     |  |

I had a jacket on, and as a matter of fact, the jacket I was wearing

Buell:

that day was my FFA jacket.

Buell: Well, there's been a lot of rumors. When... when we were... when we were outside the building, before we had gone in, I remember seeing Lee come from the... the dock area and walk up the street beside the Texas School Book Depository building. And there was so many things going on, and... and I saw him as he walked up. And he went across Houston Street, and I thought he may have going to get him a sandwich or something. So, I really didn't think anything about it, and I lost him in the crowd. And I don't know what happened from there.

| How long after the assassination do you think this was?   |  |
|---|--|
| Oh, probably five to ten minutes probably.  |  |
| ary: So, you remember seeing him briefly coming down Houston Street ong the side of the building? |  |
| (nodding) Yes.  |  |
| So, that told you that he must have gone out the backdoor by the                                  |  |
| (nodding) Yes, by the loading dock. That's exactly right.   |  |
| And did you see him cross Houston Street?   |  |
|   |  |

Buell: (1:30:33) He crossed Houston Street and then started across Elm Street, and I turned because someone said something to me. And I turned to answer them, and then when I turned back and looked in that direction, he was gone.

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| Gary:             | Could he have come out the front door of the Depository?     |
|-------------------|--|
| Buell:            | (shaking head) No.   |
| Gary:<br>saw him? | No. So, how far away from him do you think you were when you |

Buell: The closest I got to him when he was walking up the... along the side the Texas School Book Depository coming from the dock area, was probably... probably ten/twelve feet.

Gary: Do you remember anything about him? Did he look...?

Buell: No, he didn't look any different or act any different than he did. There was so many people and so much chaos and everything all around by then that I thought maybe he was just going somewhere to get him a sandwich.

Gary: And how was he dressed? Do you remember? Was he in his T-shirt, or did he have his shirt on?

Buell: (nodding) He had his jacket on.

Gary: His jacket.

Buell: He had his jacket on that day.

Gary: Let me regroup here. So, at some point, you finally went... you went back into the building and then went downstairs into the basement to... to finish... to eat your lunch?

Buell: Yes.

Gary: You were down in the basement when some investigators, police, or whatever came in?

Buell: Yes.

Gary: You were all by yourself down there?

Buell: (nodding) Yes, I was all by myself, and they asked me, had I seen anyone come down into the basement while I was there, or did I see anyone go up the stairway there by the belt. And I said... I told them, I said, "No, sir." And I told them I did hear somebody over on the stairway, but I never could see what... see anybody. I heard somebody over there, but I didn't... I couldn't see anybody. So, it was... so, I don't know, but maybe it was just one of the investigators or policemen, you know, in the searching of the building.

Gary: Golly, I had a question there, and it went away. Oh! Had you seen anyone in the building that day that you didn't recognize?

Buell: (shaking head) No.

Gary: No strange faces?

Buell: No strange faces.

Gary: At some point then, you must have thought, "What am I going to do for the rest of the day? Am I supposed to stay here and work, or are we dismissed? What do we do?" So, what did you do?

Buell: (1:33:33) All right. After I ate my lunch, I went back upstairs, and by that time, on the first floor there, people were milling around—people that worked in the building there—and were talking and everything. And Mr. Shelley got us together—he and Mr. Truly—and we had a roll call.

Buell: Outside Mr. Shelley's office.

Gary: And his office...?

Buell: Right there between Mr. Shelley... Mr. Shelley's office was right next to Mr. Truly's.

Gary: On the...?

Buell: If you came in off... if you would have entered the Texas School Book Depository building by the steps on which I was standing watching the parade, when you... when you come into the building there, to your right would be an elevator going up to the offices, publisher's offices. And... and if you'd of come straight through the double doors there, then you would be... and right, to your right, was Mr. Truly's office. And there was a counter there that, a lot of times teachers would come and... for a will call and pick up a textbook. And we had the will calls laying right there because sometimes, Mr. Shelley would say, "Here, a will call. They'll be by to pick this up shortly." And I'd go and pull it, and I'd bring it back up there. And then actually he'd check it before letting the teacher have it. So, Mr. Truly's office there was first, and then right next to his was Mr. Shelley's. And in that area right there is where we... where we all grouped together there and had a roll call.

Gary: You and the other guys who were order fillers then?

| Buell: | Yes. |
|--------|------|
| Buell: | Yes. |

Gary: OK.

Buell: Everyone that worked in the warehouse there either whether they were (word indecipherable) or whether they was an order filler or a packer or what their function was. Now, the people up in the... that worked up in the publisher's office, I'm sure they had their own roll call, but the warehouse personnel had theirs right at that location I stated earlier, there outside of Mr. Shelley's and Mr. Truly's office.

Gary: OK. And Truly and Shelley are both there?

Buell: Yes.

Gary: OK. And did they actually read off names, or did they just ask you guys, "Anybody missing?"

| Buell: | No, they they read names off, and you had to answer. |
|--------|--|
| Gary:  | OK. And who was missing?                             |
| Buell: | (nodding) The only person missing was Lee Oswald.    |
| Gary:  | Do you remember Charlie Givens?                      |
| Buell: | (nodding) Yes.                                       |
|        |  |

Gary: He wasn't there. Or was he?

Buell: (1:36:36) I know Charles Givens worked with us there at the Texas School Book Depository. Whether he was there that day, I can't... I can't... I don't remember. But I know he was... that he did work there. A man by the name of Eddie Piper and then we had a man named Harold Norman, and we had a man named Wes—he went by Wes—his name was Wesley... I can't remember his last name right... right now, but he was an older Afro-American individual. Wes and Eddie Piper were the two oldest Afro-American people that worked there, and Eddie Piper, he... he helped pack some of the packages for shipment and he also had custodial duties there in the building (nodding).

| Gary:<br>name. | You're talking about Wes and Wesley. Wesley is your middle |
|----------------|--|
| Buell:         | Yes.   |
| Gary:          | But back in those days, you went by Wes/Wesley also.       |

Buell: (nodding) Yes, I went by Wesley, and the older gentleman that I referred to earlier, he went by Wes.

Gary: OK, but now, you go by Buell.

Buell: That is correct.

Gary: And what's that all about (chuckling)?

Buell: Well, as I was growing up, the name Buell... most youngsters that I was going to school with, they couldn't pronounce it or spell it. And sometimes, children can be very cruel by making fun of your names. So, I opted to go with Wesley. Today, now, I have adjusted, and... and things that when I was a child would probably hurt my feelings wouldn't do that today because, by this time in my life, I think I've heard all the jokes about my name that you can do. And I learned that... it's an old nursery rhyme I say to myself, "Sticks and stones may hurt your bones, but words will never harm me."

| Gary:  | OK. Let's go back to the roll call. | Oswald was unaccounted for? |
|--------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Buell: | Yes.                                |                             |

Gary: What did all you guys think about that?

Buell: Well, at first, I didn't think anything about it because I thought he might had—as I said earlier—he might had walked over... because in some of the buildings around there, there was places that you could get sandwiches. And I thought he may have walked over there, and due to what had happened earlier, and... I thought maybe he was... had gotten tied up over there getting him a sandwich or something and that he was probably be back shortly because nothing was made of it at first when he wasn't there.

Gary: OK. So, then what happened? Were you guys told to just go home for the day or...?

Buell: (1:39:57) Well, after we had the roll call, and we stayed there for a short time. I don't know exactly how many minutes it was. But when they realized that Lee wasn't coming back, Mr. Truly and Mr. Shelley got the OK from management upstairs on the second floor that due to what had happened that day that we were just going to shut down and call it a day. And that's what we did.

Gary: During the roll call, you mentioned that Truly was there.

Buell: Yes.

Gary: Do you remember him saying anything about him having seen Oswald?

Buell: I don't remember anything, but I think I have heard or read somewhere where... where that Mr. Truly was with someone searching the building, and I think they had... they had seen Lee in the lunchroom.

Gary: That event happened, and that event happened within a minute or two of the assassination. So, the roll call took place when? How long afterwards did that happen?

Buell: The roll call was probably... probably somewhere I'd probably say thirty, forty-five minutes after that.

Gary: OK. So, well, this is...

Buell: But I'm not sure now about exactly how long the roll call was afterwards. From my memory, I'd probably say it was probably thirty to forty-five minutes after the assassination that we actually had the roll call.

Gary: So, in this thirty to forty-five minute period, you were just hanging out, wondering what to do and wondering what was going on?

| Buell:             | (nodding) Yes.  |
|--------------------|---|
| Gary:              | After the roll call then, the decision was made to call it a day? |
| Buell:             | Yes.  |
| Gary:<br>had died? | Was that before or after you had learned that President Kennedy   |

Buell: That was before because when I had left and was on my way home, that's when I learned that he was pronounced dead out at the hospital. And... and by that time, the news channels were... everybody was trying to report what had happened there that day.

Gary: OK. Now, this was a Friday. Normally, you would take Oswald with you on Friday.

Buell: Yes.

Gary: But not this day. What happened? Did you expect to be taking him home this afternoon?

Buell: No, he had told me earlier when I asked him why he was going out on Thursday rather than Friday, and that's when he told me to get the curtain rods to hang the curtains for his apartment. He told me he wouldn't be going home with me that day.

Gary: And was... did this strike you as being unusual?

Buell: (shaking head) No, not at the time being because when I said nothing unusual because our conversations were mainly about work while we were working, and he never had given the impression that he had lied to me. So therefore, it was... I didn't have any reason to... to think something was unusual.

Gary: OK. You're in your car. You hear on the radio that President Kennedy has pronounced dead?

Buell:Yes.Gary:You're on your way back home to Irving?Buell:Yes.Gary:When you got home, who was there, your sister? Was she there<br/>with the kids or...?Buell:Well, I didn't go directly home.Gary:OK.

Buell: (1:43:56) What I had... what I did was that I stopped by the hospital where my stepfather... he and my mother were up visiting my sister and her husband and children. And he had had a... he had had, I think, a heart attack. I know he was... he had several heart attacks before he passed away, but he was in there and they were... they were treating him, I think, for... for heart failure.

Gary: When had he gone... when had he gone into the hospital?

Buell: He had gone into the hospital, I think, a day or two before Friday or... he'd been there several days, so I thought I'd stop by and check on him and see how he was doing. And then, I could tell my mother because... when I got home how he was doing.

Gary: And which hospital was he in?

Buell: He was in the hospital. It's not a hospital anymore. It... but this... at this time, it was a hospital located at Irving Boulevard and Pioneer.

Gary: Pioneer. So, that was in Dallas or in Irving?

Buell: In Irving.

Gary: In Irving, OK, and how much... how long... how much time there did you spend at the hospital?

Buell: (1:45:29) Well, I had only been there a short time, and by the way, I didn't go home—directly go home—after I left there. I was there a short time, and I... and the nurse came into the room because a nurse earlier had asked me, she was... they were giving him a... oh, it was glucose or whatever they was giving him. She asked me to count the drops for a minute to check her, and I was doing that because she was going to be back in a minute. Another nurse came in, not the one that had asked me to check the drops for a minute that he was getting on the medication that they were giving him. But she said, "You have... you have a phone call." And I said, "Well, just patch it to the room, and I'll get it." I thought it might have been my mother or somebody calling to check on my... my stepfather. And she said, "Well," she says, "we can't do that. You'll have to come out here to the... the nurse's station and take the call." Well, I opened the door and proceeded to the nurse's station, and at that time, I was met suddenly by two detectives from the Dallas Police Department. They were Detective Rose and Detective Stovall, and they proceeded to frisk me... frisk me and check me. And I was totally surprised because I couldn't understand why this was being done to me. And... and after catching me by surprise and... they told me that they were taking me to downtown Dallas, and we... they were parked out close to my car, and they had already been searching in my car because I remember looking in the backseat. The backseat had been pulled out, and I asked him, I said, "What have you been doing in my car?" And they said, "Well, we've been searching your car."

Gary: Had they not indicated to you what their interest was in talking with you?

Buell: They... they said it was in reference to the death of John F. Kennedy, and then after I... being in their custody, I learned more. But I couldn't understand... I will never understand why they treated me the way they did, but it wasn't long that they found out that... that I didn't know anything. And Detective Rose and Detective Stovall, they became two of my best friends.

| Gary: time this happened? | OK. Let's do you have any idea at what time what point in |
|---------------------------|---|
| Buell:                    | Oh, at the time that they arrested me?                    |

Gary: Yeah, yeah. When you first met these guys...

Buell: I'd probably say it was probably somewhere... probably between 1:30 and two o'clock in the afternoon. Now, I don't know what time they show that they

actually, you know, picked me up or arrested me, but I... I'd just probably say it was probably 1:30. Somewhere between 1:30 and two o'clock.

Gary: OK. Let me see if I can jog your memory a little bit here. President Kennedy was pronounced dead at one o'clock.

| Buell:               | OK.   |
|----------------------|---|
| Gary:                | But it wasn't announced until about 1:30.                         |
| Buell:<br>the radio. | OK, and I was on my way out to the hospital because I heard it on |
| Gary:                | Uh-huh.   |
| Buell:               | (nodding) OK.   |

Gary: So, you probably would have gotten to the hospital about... no later than two o'clock, I would think. Maybe... maybe five or ten minutes after. So, you're with your stepfather...

| Buell:  | (nodding) Uh-huh.  |
|---|--|
| Gary:   | for some period of time.   |
| Buell:  | A short time, a very short time.   |
| Gary:   | Ten minutes or a half hour?  |
| Buell:<br>most. Ten/fifteen mi  | Probably probably not more than ten minutes at the nutes at the most.                          |
| Gary:<br>station, and that's wh   | OK, and that's when you got the call to go out to the nurses'<br>en Rose and Stovall appeared? |
| Buell:  | (nodding) Yes.   |
| Gary:   | Well, that would put it at about 2:30, quarter to three at the latest.                         |
| Buell: Well, I I don't know exactly all the times, but like I say, I would I wasn't looking at the time. And  |  |
| Gary: Well, how did they find how did they come up with your name so fast? Did they ever tell you that? First of all, did they tell it did they tell you that back then, or have you subsequently learned from them how they got your name? |  |

Buell: (1:50:34) No, I don't know how they got my name, but I know they... they had been out to my sister's home in Irving before they come to the hospital.

Gary: So, they learned from... from Linnie where you were?

Buell: I think I called her once I got to the hospital from the phone in the room. I think I called and told her that I was up at the hospital and I was going to stay up there for a while. Now, little I did... I didn't know at that time, but all this other was going on because they had... I remember, they did go out to the house before coming up to the hospital.

Gary: Is it possible that your... your memory might have distorted the times a bit because this seems awfully fast, and I wonder if some of these events might have taken place later in the afternoon than you're remembering?

Buell: I could be wrong, but I don't think so, Gary, because... because I know I left work and I heard about the president being pronounced dead. And at the time, the area wasn't as congested with traffic as it is now. The... the population is much greater now in the Dallas area than it was then, and I remember going out to the hospital there. And I wasn't there very long—ten/fifteen minutes at the most—till they were there, but how they got my name and how they got onto me, I don't... I don't know.

Gary: Oswald was... walked into the police department right about two o'clock, so sometime after two is when they learned that he was a Depository employee. They could only have learned about you from him, I would think, unless... was there anyone else in the Depository who knew that Oswald rode to and from work with you sometimes?

Buell: Billy and Mr. Shelley knew.

Gary: Hmmm. Well, I wonder if the police could have heard from those two? Well, of course, then, see, they'd still have to tie in Oswald's name to all of this.

Buell: Yes, and how... how that occurred, I can't answer that because I have no idea. Now maybe if you would check with Detective Rose and Detective Stovall because they... they worked under Captain Will Fritz. Maybe they could give you a better idea about that, but that I can't help you with because I don't know.

Gary: And you say since then you've become friends with these guys? Have you seen them recently?

Buell: No, when... I want to clarify that that I became friends with them—not like somebody I would see on a weekly or day basis or something like that. But after they thoroughly checked me out and they interrogated me for quite some time, they had gone to Captain Will Fritz and says, "This kid doesn't know anything. He's clean." But Captain Will Fritz wouldn't accept that, and they told me that they... and they had other people in the police department. And it was other detectives besides them that cross-examined me. It was quite intense. It was just one cross-examining after another. A team would work on me for a while, asking me questions, and I'd tell what I could and then somebody else would come in. This went on for quite some time, and they finally were convinced that, hey, I wasn't guilty of anything. I'm just a person in the wrong place at the wrong time, and they both gave me their cards and told me if I ever had problems about this, be sure and give them a call. And somewhere over the years, I have... I have put them up. I don't carry them in my wallet. I did for a long time because I was real afraid that someone would ask me about that, and... but that is my friendship with them—that afterwards, they found out that I wasn't involved in this, and I could talk to them more freely.

Gary: So, they took you from the hospital up in Irving all the way down to headquarters...

| Buell: | Downtown Dallas.   |
|--------|--|
| Gary:  | Downtown Dallas, and you were there for how long?            |
| Buell: | I was there it was after midnight before I got to come home. |
| Gary:  | Really?  |

Buell: (1:55:41) I was there quite some time. They... they said that, at one time, they were letting... they were taking me home, and they started out Stemmons Freeway and probably got out to some area around Inwood or Mockingbird. And then, they turned around and took me back again. And I went through some more questioning and so forth, and by the time I got out of there, it was after midnight.

Gary: Do you remember the names of some of the others who questioned you?

Buell: (shaking head) No.

Gary: I have... I have a third name here. I have three names here. You've already named two of them (chuckling). Adamcik—that was his last name.

Buell: Say again, please?

Gary: Adamcik?

Buell: I don't remember that name, but at that point, things were happening so fast. Here's a boy that's only nineteen-years-old from a small, rural area, and all of sudden, you're involved in a case that you did not choose to be involved in that everyone in the world now knows about. And it was... it was quite... quite a horrifying experience for me because I never had any problem with the law at all, and then all of a sudden, I was in the process of trying to be tied into the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Gary: When and how did you first realize that you were connected to this event through Lee Harvey Oswald?

| Buell:                 | When they arrested me.                             |
|------------------------|--|
| Gary:                  | Well, did they tell you why?                       |
| Buell:<br>questioning. | They told me they were taking me downtown for some |
| C                      |  |

Gary: But did... well, when did you first hear that Oswald—your friend, Lee—was a suspect?

Buell: On the way out to the hospital. It come over the... the news station that I was listening to, and I don't remember whether it was 820 or 1480. I don't remember which station I was listening to. Probably 1480, but I'm not for sure. They said that the suspect that they were trying to find and was their best lead was Lee Oswald. Well, that really... that really threw me for a curve.

Gary: I was going to say, you were in your car driving and you're hearing that the police are looking for Lee Oswald?

Buell: Lee Oswald in connection with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Well, that was... to me, that was mind-boggling because I asked myself, how could Lee do something like that? Because the man I knew was so... was such a perfectionist in what he did, and he tried to do everything correctly. And he was so good with the children in the neighborhood. I asked myself, how could someone do something like that?

Gary: Are you clear that the information you heard was that the police were looking for him or that he had been arrested?

Buell: Well, the first thing they said, "We have a... we have a suspect that we're looking for in connection with the assassination of John F. Kennedy." And they said, "His name is Lee Oswald." Well, I knew that the chances of that being someone... and then, they said, well, he was employed at the Texas School Book Depository. Well, I knew that was the same Lee that I... that I knew.

Gary: And this did not make sense to you that...

Buell: No.

Gary: ... Oswald could be connected?

Buell: No. It was very hard for me to... to even begin to believe that he could do something like that.

Gary: And you're certain that this happened before you arrived at the hospital?

Buell: (nodding) Yes. Now, what time this news thing was and what exactly what time it was, I was the way out to the hospital to see my stepfather. I can't be specific. I can only estimate.

| Stephen: | Let me switch tapes again.                 |
|----------|--|
| Gary:    | Oh, OK. Gee, we went through another hour? |
| Stephen: | Yeah, exactly.                             |

Total Running Time: 2:00:29

Transcribed by Stephen Fagin, December 2003

Unrevised

For Research Purposes Only The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza