

Testimony of Lewis McWillie
HSCA volume V, pages 1-240
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Summary

Lewis McWillie was a Dallas gambler in the 1940s and 1950s. He ran various gambling houses and dice games in the Dallas area. In 1951 Jack Ruby introduced himself to McWillie in a coffee shop in Dallas. Ruby asked McWillie for some advice, and subsequently, McWillie asserts, he could not get rid of Ruby. The McWillie testimony is dominated by the names of Dallas gamblers and hoodlums who may or may not have known Jack Ruby. Most of the names are unfamiliar to McWillie. McWillie moved to Havana, Cuba in the late 1950s to manage the Tropicana Casino. Jack Ruby visited McWillie there in 1959. This trip raised a number of questions about the relationship between Jack Ruby and McWillie, and about a possible Ruby/Cuban underworld connection to the assassination of JFK. McWillie feels Ruby has caused him a great deal of grief over the years because he killed Lee Oswald.

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- page 4 Ruby introduced himself to McWillie in a restaurant in Dallas in 1951.
- pages 7-151 McWillie's deposition to the HSCA (exhibit JFK F-572) is admitted to the record. Transcripts of McWillie's interviews with the FBI are also admitted (JFK F-573 and JFK F-574).
- pages 15-22 McWillie reviews his background in the gambling business. He worked in various casinos and gambling houses in Texas, Cuba, and Nevada starting in the early 1940s until the mid-1970s. At the time of his testimony he managed the gambling operations of the Holiday Inn in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- page 24 Jack Ruby introduced himself to McWillie in a coffee shop in 1951. McWillie gave him some advice, and Ruby became a hanger-on to McWillie. McWillie says he could not get rid of him after that.
- pages 26-27 McWillie testifies that in 1959 he was working at the Tropicana Casino in Havana. While trying to develop business for the casino he invited Jack Ruby and Tony Zoppi, a Dallas entertainment columnist, down to Havana.

McWillie hoped that Zoppi would write a favorable column on the trip and that Dallas' society people would then visit the Tropicana. Because Ruby made the trip alone, McWillie and the Tropicana received nothing for their generosity. McWillie says that this trip is the source of all of his problems.

pages 126-127 Contrary to his HSCA testimony, McWillie told the FBI on June 9, 1964, that he personally invited Jack Ruby to come and spend a week vacationing in Havana. McWillie paid for the trip himself. He asserts in testimony to the HSCA that he just forgot about the Zoppi connection until 1976.

page 134 McWillie's questioner states that in a deposition for the HSCA, Zoppi asserts that he was supposed to go on a trip to Cuba in late 1958, but he did not go because Fidel Castro took over. McWillie then testifies that perhaps he had invited them down in 1958, but he definitely made arrangements for Jack Ruby to bring Tony Zoppi to Havana in the summer of 1959.

pages 161-167 McWillie is questioned concerning gambling interests in Havana shortly before and after the Cuban revolution. McWillie testifies that there were many American gamblers imprisoned after Castro took power. He twice visited Trescornia, an immigration detention center. In Trescornia, he saw or spoke to Santos Trafficante, Jake Lansky, Dino Cellini, and Giuseppe deGeorge. **McWillie is not clear as to whether Jack Ruby visited Trescornia with him during Ruby's trip to Cuba.**

page 197 The committee admits exhibits JFK F-583 and F-584. Both exhibits are identification cards obtained from the Cuban government. F-583 indicates that Jack Ruby traveled to Cuba from New Orleans on August 8, 1959, and left September 11, 1959. F-584 indicates that Ruby then traveled to Cuba from Miami on September 12, 1959 and returned on September 13, 1959. McWillie testifies that Ruby came to Havana in August or September of 1959 and stayed only one week. The committee's handwriting panel confirms that the signatures on the two identification cards are Jack Ruby's.

pages 202-220 The committee admits exhibits JFK F-585 which are some of Jack Ruby's bank records, and JFK F-586 which are the FBI reports of their contact with Jack Ruby as a potential criminal informant. These records indicate that Jack Ruby was in Dallas on several different days in the August 8 to September 13, 1959 time period. McWillie repeats that Jack Ruby visited him for no more

than one week.