

Lehrer, James

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1DL 100-10461
EFP/dsOther Individuals and Organizations
Involved or Interviewed

The following investigation was conducted on May 18, 1964, at Dallas, Texas, by SA's EUGENE F. PETRAKIS and A. RAYMOND SWITZER:

KENNETH SMART, City Editor, 4th Floor, "Dallas Times Herald", Herald Square, Dallas, Texas, was exhibited a clipping taken from the "Dallas Times Herald" edition of November 28, 1963, captioned "OSWALD GUN SIGHT MOUNTED IN IRVING". SMART advised, upon perusal of this article, that on Thursday, November 28, 1963, he was at home as a result of a virus infection and, therefore, did not read the rewrite on this article which was routed over the City Editor's desk. SMART advised the reporting and rewrite of this article could have been handled by the following reporters:

- ✓ GEORGE CARTER, police reporter, attached to the Dallas Police Department and Dallas County Sheriff's Office every day except Thursday and Sunday;
- ✓ DARWIN PAYNE, alternate police reporter who handles Police Department and Sheriff's Office on Thursday and in the absence of CARTER;
- ✓ BEN STEVENS, rewrite desk, who may have handled the rewrite of this article. STEVENS presently is on vacation;
- ✓ JAMES LEHRER, city reporter;
- ✓ HUNTER SCHMIDT, JR., county reporter, who handles all outlying areas on a roving reporter basis, including Irving, Texas.

The above-noted article was exhibited to GEORGE CARTER, DARWIN PAYNE and JAMES LEHRER, and all advised they did not write this article and could not recall anything else concerning it. JAMES LEHRER, however, stated he recalled this matter had been handled by HUNTER SCHMIDT, JR., and that SCHMIDT had written the article upon receipt of information which he believed was based upon an anonymous tip.

C. R. 1066

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Other individuals and organizations
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RPG/ds

Following the re-enactment of the assassination of President JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY at Dallas, Texas, on May 24, 1964, considerable publicity was given to the effect that one of the three bullets fired at the time of the assassination went wild.

On June 5, 1964, there appeared an article in the "Dallas Times Herald" newspaper by reporter JAMES C. LEHRER alleging that a Dallas auto salesman had stated one of the three bullets fired during the assassination went wild, crashed into a curb and apparently struck him.

On June 5, 1964, JAMES C. LEHRER, reporter, "Dallas Times Herald," advised SA ALFRED C. ELLINGTON that he had interviewed one JIM TAGUE, aged 27, used car salesman, employed by the Cedar Springs Dodge Automobile Agency, Dallas, Texas, and that a story regarding this interview would appear in the "Dallas Times Herald" on June 5, 1964.

Mr. LEHRER stated that he had made an appointment with TAGUE prior to the interview and, upon his arrival at TAGUE's place of employment and prior to the beginning of the interview, TAGUE inquired of him, "What's in this for me?" Additional conversation with TAGUE disclosed that if his story were worth any money he, TAGUE, desired to receive the money. Mr. LEHRER advised that he told TAGUE he would not know whether his story was worth any money until he "had heard the story."

At the conclusion of his interview with TAGUE, Mr. LEHRER stated he informed TAGUE that his story was "interesting", but was not considered startling and was not believed to be worth any money to anyone.

Mr. LEHRER advised that as he was leaving following the interview, TAGUE requested LEHRER to view three minutes of motion picture film which TAGUE had taken at the Indianapolis 500-mile race depicting the crash and resulting fire which

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claimed the lives of two of the race drivers. After viewing this film, TAGUE inquired of LEHRER where he could sell this film and indicated he thought it was worth quite a sum of money. LEHRER advised that he personally felt the film was inferior, but that in order to "get away from TAGUE" he advised TAGUE to call EDDIE BARKER, KRLD-TV, Dallas, Texas, and that BARKER could tell him if the film were worth any money.

JIM TAGUE has been interviewed previously in this investigation, the results of which interview are reflected on page 31 of the report of Special Agent ROBERT P. GEMBERLING dated December 23, 1963, in instant captioned case.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Other Individuals and Organizations
Involved or InterviewedDate 7/22/64

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Mrs. JAMES M. (WILMA) TICE, 8406 Lakemont Drive, was interviewed in the presence of her husband. She advised they have home telephone No. FL 2-2559.

At the outset of the interview, Mrs. TICE advised that at approximately 10:00 a.m., July 22, 1964, she received a telephone call from a man who identified himself as JIM LEHRER of "The Dallas Times Herald." She stated he inquired of her as to what she was going to testify to before the President's Commission. She said she declined to discuss it with him and he informed her he knew she was to testify before the President's Commission and was to appear at 2:30 p.m., on Friday, July 24, 1964. Mrs. TICE said she declined to discuss this matter with LEHRER and terminated the conversation.

Mrs. TICE advised she does not know how JIM LEHRER obtained the information that she was to testify before the President's Commission in Dallas, Texas. She said that on Sunday, July 20, 1964, she received an airmail special delivery registered letter, return receipt requested, from the President's Commission informing that she was to testify before that Commission in Dallas at 2:30 p.m. on July 24, 1964. She said she did not discuss this letter with anyone, not even her husband.

Mrs. TICE advised that around 1:00 or 1:30 a.m., on July 22, 1964, she was awakened by the ringing of the telephone. She said she picked up the telephone to answer it and the caller hung up. Within a minute or so, Mrs. TICE stated the telephone again rang, she picked it up, and again the caller hung up. By this time, Mrs. TICE advised she was wide awake. She said she lighted a cigarette and sat down in the living room. She advised as she was just about finished smoking the cigarette the doorbell rang. She said she went to window and looked out to see who was at the door but saw no one. At this point, Mrs. TICE stated she awakened her niece, EDITH TICE, age 14, who is visiting at her house. Mrs. TICE stated she was very concerned and both she and EDITH went through the house peering out the windows to see if they could locate any prowlers. Mrs. TICE stated she telephoned her husband who was then at work at

on 7/22/64 at Dallas, Texas File # DL 44-1639
by Special Agent A. RAYMOND SWITZER:vm Date dictated 7/22/64

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American Airlines, Love Field, Dallas, Texas, to inform him of what had transpired and to seek his advice. She stated her husband came home from work sometime after 2:00 a.m. Mrs. TICE advised she also called the Dallas Police Department and informed she had a prowler around their residence. She said the Dallas Police responded to her call and on inspecting their house discovered a twelve foot two by four homemade ladder wedged against the bottom of the aluminum storm door at the back of the house. She said her husband had made this ladder and it had been stored next to the garage at the rear of the house. She stated the police officers also observed that the spring snap which holds the slatted wooden front screen-storm door secure had been manipulated so that this door could not be opened from the inside without forcing it. She stated police officers also observed that the side gate was open. She stated this gate was closed when she retired for the night.

As set out above, Mrs. TICE advised that on Sunday, July 19, 1964, at about 2:00 p.m., she received the letter from the President's Commission. She said her husband was home at the time and was curious as to why the President's Commission would be corresponding with her. She said she declined to open this letter in the presence of her husband. Mrs. TICE stated her reason for not opening the letter in the presence of her husband was because he "fussed" at her when JACK RUBY's two sisters, EVA GRANT and EILEEN KAMINSKY, visited her on April 30, 1964. Since this time, Mrs. TICE said she has not discussed anything concerning JACK RUBY or the President's Commission with her husband. Mrs. TICE said she had nothing but trouble with her husband after RUBY's two sisters visited her.

Mrs. TICE was questioned as to how she contacted RUBY's sisters or how they knew to contact her. Mrs. TICE declined to answer this question.

Mrs. TICE advised that on Monday afternoon, July 20, 1964, at about 2:00 p.m., she received a telephone call as follows:

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Mrs. TICE: "Hello"

Unknown Male Caller: "Mrs. Tice?"

Mrs. TICE: "Hello"

Unknown Male Caller: "It would pay you to keep your
mouth shut."

Mrs. TICE said the unknown male caller then hung up. She said he had a distinct, mature, well-modulated voice with no detectable accent. She said the voice was not familiar to her and she has no idea who made the call but believes it was a local call.

Mrs. TICE stated she has no information to support her belief but believes there is a connection between the above anonymous call, the incident of a prowler at her residence in the early morning hours of July 22, 1964, and the fact that she is to appear before the President's Commission on Friday, July 24, 1964.

Mrs. TICE related that about one and one half years ago she had received several anonymous telephone calls. She stated at this time many of her husband's fellow employees were having marital difficulties and their families also received anonymous telephone calls. She stated the calls she received then would usually be from a woman inquiring if her husband were home and when she called him to the telephone the caller would have already hung up. She said she considered these calls nuisance, prank-type calls.

Mrs. TICE reiterated that since April 30, 1964, when her husband "fussed" at her because RUBY's two sisters, EVA GRANT and EILEEN KAMINSKY, visited her at her house, she has not discussed anything with him relating to JACK RUBY or the assassination of President KENNEDY. She advised she had no information to offer at this time, but stated that should she receive any information that would be of assistance in this matter she would contact the interviewing Agent.

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As interviewing Agent was departing the TICE residence, two men who identified themselves as detectives from Captain FRITZ' office, Homicide and Robbery Bureau, Dallas Police Department, entered the TICE residence and informed they were there at the direction of Captain FRITZ to interview Mr. and Mrs. TICE.

CR1318

FD-302 (Rev. 3-3-59)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

EVA GRANT
EILEEN KAMISKYOther Individuals and Organizations
Involved or InterviewedDate 7/22/64

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DL 44-1639

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LEHRER, James (Deposition)
from #163

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PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION
ON THE
ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Dallas, Texas

July 24, 1964

10:45 A. M.

The President's Commission met, pursuant to recess, at 10:45 a. m., in Room 301, Federal Building, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas.

PRESENT:

WESLEY J. LIEBELER, Staff Counsel

ODELL OLIVER, Reporter

ODELL OLIVER
COURT REPORTER • FEDERAL COURT
BRYAN AND ERVAY
PHONE RI 8-2251
DALLAS 1, TEXAS

P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 MR. LIEBELER: Will you please stand and take
4 the oath?

5 Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you
6 are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth
7 and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

8 MR. LEHRER: I do.

9 MR. LIEBELER: My name is Wesley J. Liebeler.
10 I am an attorney on the staff of the President's
11 Commission investigating the assassination of President
12 Kennedy. I have been authorized to take your testimony
13 by the Commission pursuant to authority granted to it
14 by President Johnson's Executive Order 11,130, dated
15 November 29, 1963, and ~~the~~ Joint Resolution of
16 Congress No. 137.

17 Under the Commission's rules governing the
18 taking of testimony, you are entitled to three days'
19 notice and to have an attorney here if you want to,
20 and you are entitled to the usual privileges and
21 rights concerning self incrimination and that sort of
22 thing as far as answering my questions is concerned.

23 I know that you have not had three days'
24 notice of this, but I understand that you are here
25 voluntarily and that you are prepared to proceed with-

1 out an attorney; is that correct?

2 MR. LEHRER: Yes, sir.

3 MR. LIEBELER: Please state your name, please?

4 MR. LEHRER: James Lehrer, (spelling)

5 L-e-h-r-e-r.

6 MR. LIEBELER: When and where were you born?

7 MR. LEHRER: May 19, 1934, Wichita, Kansas.

8 MR. LIEBELER: Where do you live?

9 MR. LEHRER: Dallas -- 3709 West Beverly.

10 MR. LIEBELER: Would you outline your educa-
11 tional background for us, please?

12 MR. LEHRER: High school, graduate of Victoria
13 College, University of Missouri.

14 MR. LIEBELER: What did you major in at the
15 University?

16 MR. LEHRER: Journalism.

17 MR. LIEBELER: ~~And you are~~ presently employed
18 by The Dallas Times Herald, ~~is that correct?~~ *(initials)*

19 MR. LEHRER: Yes.

20 MR. LIEBELER: How long have you worked with
21 them?

22 MR. LEHRER: Nearly three years.

23 MR. LIEBELER: What is your job over there?

24 MR. LEHRER: I am a reporter.

25 MR. LIEBELER: Do you cover a specific beat?

1 MR. LEHRER: I cover the Federal beat, labor,
2 and politics -- some politics.

3 MR. LIEBELER: What did you do before you
4 went to work with the Dallas Times Herald?

5 MR. LEHRER: I was with the Dallas Morning
6 News about two years.

7 MR. LIEBELER: Before that?

8 MR. LEHRER: I was in the Marine Corps. I
9 went there directly from school into the Service.

10 MR. LIEBELER: And then you came to work
11 for the Dallas Morning News?

12 MR. LEHRER: I did.

13 MR. LIEBELER: Then you went to work for the
14 Dallas Times Herald and you are employed by them now?

15 MR. LEHRER: Yes, sir.

16 MR. LIEBELER: I have received information
17 that you were in the office of the Dallas Times
18 Herald on the morning of November 28, 1963; is that
19 correct?

20 MR. LEHRER: Yes.

21 MR. LIEBELER: Would you tell us when you got
22 there and what you did that morning and what you
23 saw?

24 MR. LEHRER: Well, it was Thanksgiving and
25 I got there about 7:00 or 7:30, something like that,

1 and I don't remember specifically any stories that
2 I worked on on that day. It was just a routine day,
3 not a routine day -- a holiday is not routine, because
4 you don't work the whole day on a holiday, so I only
5 worked until around noon that day.

6 MR. LIEBELER: You got to the office about
7 7:00 o'clock?

8 MR. LEHRER: About 7:00 or 7:30 -- something
9 like that.

10 MR. LIEBELER: Do you know Hunter Schmidt,
11 Jr.?

12 MR. LEHRER: Yes, I do.

13 MR. LIEBELER: And he is also employed as a
14 reporter by the Dallas Times Herald, ~~isn't that right?~~ UW

15 MR. LEHRER: Yes.

16 MR. LIEBELER: And he was at that time?

17 MR. LEHRER: Right.

18 MR. LIEBELER: Did you see him in the office
19 that morning?

20 MR. LEHRER: Yes, sir.

21 MR. LIEBELER: You are familiar with the fact
22 that a story appeared in the Dallas Times Herald on
23 this day concerning a gun shop in Irving, Texas, at
24 which Oswald was supposed to have had some work done
25 on a rifle, ~~isn't that right?~~ UW

1 MR. LEHRER: Right.

2 MR. LIEBELER: Were you aware of how that
3 story came into the office of the newspaper?

4 MR. LEHRER: Yes, in a general way -- the
5 desk, or the city desk, which consists of the city
6 editor and the assistant city editor or the re-write
7 staff -- somewhere they got a tip that there was a
8 fellow in Irving who had mounted the sight or knew
9 something about it. It was given to Hunter to check
10 out. I happened to be sitting over there. I do not
11 normally work physically on the city desk, but all
12 of us had been working on the assassination aspects
13 and it had been a lot of my responsibility in
14 particular, because so much of it was on my beat at
15 that time, and somebody said they got this guy and
16 they gave it to Hunter to check out and I was sitting
17 right next to Hunter and when he checked it out, --
18 in other words -- when he called.

19 MR. LIEBELER: What did he do -- do you
20 remember?

21 MR. LEHRER: Well, he just -- he was talking
22 to somebody on the telephone and he was given the
23 check out and he had the man's name before he called,
24 and he called somebody on the 'phone and I was doing
25 something myself -- I wasn't writing a story, but I

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1 was sitting there and he was talking to this guy,
2 talking to somebody on the telephone, let's put it
3 that way, and when he got through he said something
4 about, "Yeah -- this is it, that's right."

5 Or, it was words to that effect and then I
6 looked at his notes, you know, and said, "That's a
7 hell of a story," or something like that, and about
8 that time somebody said, "Don't talk about it, write
9 it," so he gave it to, I think it was -- I'm not sure
10 about this, but I think it was in a general story
11 of the assassination developments of that day, which
12 we were running every day, and I think a re-write man
13 may have taken the notes and written the story. I
14 don't recall seeing Hunter write the story.

15 MR. LIEBELER: Do you know the name of the
16 man that Schmidt was talking to?

17 MR. LEHRER: I can only assume it was Ryder.

18 MR. LIEBELER: What leads you to that assump-
19 tion?

20 MR. LEHRER: Well, it was just circumstantially
21 -- I believe it was. I mean, he was given this name
22 and the information that this man is supposed to
23 have mounted the sight on Oswald's rifle.

24 MR. LIEBELER: And the name he was given was
25 Dial Ryder; is that right?

1 MR. LEHRER: That's right -- that's right.

2 MR. LIEBELER: And he was told to check that
3 story?

4 MR. LEHRER: That's right.

5 MR. LIEBELER: And he proceeded to do it?

6 MR. LEHRER: He proceeded to do it -- he dialed
7 a number and got somebody on the line and started
8 talking and when he got through, he said, "That's
9 right." I looked at his notes -- I don't have a
10 specific recollection of what the notes said, but I
11 remember that he had some quotes there, I mean, he
12 had some information in the notes that verified the
13 story, and at that time -- one of the reasons I was
14 interested in it -- I was working on the story we
15 finally ran the next day on the FBI looking for where
16 Oswald might have possibly test fired this rifle,
17 so that was one of the reasons I was particularly
18 interested in it, because I wasn't coordinating our
19 assassination coverage, but I was vitally involved in
20 it, I would say, at that time, and I was working on
21 this, and I think he gave the notes to a re-write man,
22 I'm not sure, but I don't know what happened after
23 that.

24 MR. LIEBELER: In any event, you have the
25 specific recollection that Schmidt engaged in a conver-

1 sation over the telephone for some period of time
2 at a time when he was supposed to be checking out
3 this story of the gunsmith in Irving?

4 MR. LEHRER: That's right.

5 MR. LIEBELER: ~~And~~ after this conversation
6 was over, he indicated to you that the story checked
7 out?

8 MR. LEHRER: That's right.

9 MR. LIEBELER: ~~And~~ subsequently that day the
10 story, in fact, appeared in the newspaper, indicating
11 that there was evidence to show that Oswald had
12 taken his rifle to this particular gun shop.

13 MR. LEHRER: Right.

14 MR. LIEBELER: Have you discussed this
15 situation with Schmidt recently?

16 MR. LEHRER: No -- actually -- I talked to
17 him about it briefly this morning.

18 He was somewhat -- he didn't recall who was
19 sitting next to him and I told him I had, because
20 I didn't think there was any problem, and I just
21 mentioned that. Now, the FBI -- one thing -- as far
22 as that's concerned -- and as far as the fact that
23 somebody might think that Hunter and I got together
24 on this -- the day the FBI got this, and apparently
25 it was sent down by the Commission who said, "Check

1 this out, that Ryder apparently -- there was some
2 question about it --" and the FBI came up there and
3 a guy by the name of -- well, there were two agents
4 from Oklahoma City who were working a special on
5 the assassination at that time -- just the assassina-
6 tion story. It was Petrakis and some other guy -- I
7 don't remember the other guy's name, but they came
8 up and talked to Ken Smart. You see, there was no
9 by-line on the story and they said, "Who wrote the
10 story," and Smart apparently said he didn't know and
11 they went back and looked in the files and that
12 indicated who wrote it and so Ken came over to me
13 and showed me the story with Petrakis and this other
14 guy there, and he said, "Did you write the story?"
15 And I said, "No, Hunter Schmidt wrote the story;"
16 that's how they found out Hunter even wrote it --
17 where he got the information was when I told him and
18 so then we talked about this thing briefly, you know,
19 and Ken said, "Apparently Ryder is saying that he
20 didn't talk to anybody at the time," and I told
21 Smart and Petrakis and this other fellow here that I
22 was sitting right next to the fellow and that he was
23 talking to somebody and I assumed it was Ryder and
24 then I hadn't even mentioned it to Hunter, because
25 Hunter was not in the office that day and Petrakis

1 finally got ahold of him at home on the 'phone, I
2 believe, or talked to him later and Hunter didn't
3 even know until this morning.

4 As I say, then Hunter told me that -- it was
5 you, I believe, that told him that there was a
6 witness who could verify that there was such a
7 conversation and he said, "Who is that, what are you
8 talking about?" And he said, "Why didn't you tell
9 me before?" I said I didn't think there would be
10 any problem -- I just mentioned it to Martha Jo in
11 passing here one day.

12 MR. LIEBELER: You say this morning Schmidt
13 told you he had been over here last night and
14 he had been questioned?

15 MR. LEHRER: Yes.

16 MR. LIEBELER: Did he tell you the details
17 of his experience last night?

18 MR. LEHRER: A little bit.

19 MR. LIEBELER: He told you that Mr. Ryder
20 had been in here?

21 MR. LEHRER: Yes -- that Ryder was here.

22 MR. LIEBELER: But in point of fact and
23 indicating for the record, the way the information
24 came most recently to my attention is that you had
25 overheard this, because Mrs. Martha Jo Stroud, an

1 Assistant United States Attorney in this office,
2 told me that you had come over here after we had
3 asked Schmidt to come over and testify.

4 MR. LEHRER: Right.

5 MR. LIEBELER: And you mentioned to her in
6 passing that you thought probably we wanted Schmidt
7 to come over ~~and~~ ^{so we could} ask him about this newspaper story (Wm)
8 that was written in connection with the Irving Sports
9 Shop; isn't that right?

10 MR. LEHRER: Well, specifically, when Martha
11 Jo called Hunter and told him that somebody from the
12 Warren Commission wanted to talk to him on a certain
13 day, Hunter came over to me and said, "Somebody from
14 Washington is coming in," and you know, I didn't know
15 that anybody was coming in. You know, you are un-
16 announced on your trips here and this is part of my
17 responsibility to cover Warren Commission people when
18 they come and I try to do it, and I said -- we dis-
19 cussed -- "Maybe they want to talk to you about this
20 deal, because the FBI had talked to you before," and
21 so the next day when I was down talking to Martha Jo,
22 we were talking about it and I indicated to her this
23 was probably what it was. I told her what it was
24 probably about and I said there was no problem -- I
25 was just sitting there and just sitting there very

1 casually.

2 MR. LIEBELER: You don't have any doubt in
3 your mind whatsoever that Schmidt actually talked to
4 Ryder that morning, do you?

5 MR. LEHRER: No.

6 MR. LIEBELER: You are aware of the fact, of
7 course, that Ryder denies talking to this man?

8 MR. LEHRER: That's what I understand.

9 MR. LIEBELER: And you have no information
10 that would suggest any reason why Ryder would deny
11 this?

12 MR. LEHRER: I can't think of any reason
13 unless he denies the information, if he just denies
14 the technicality that he didn't talk to a newspaper
15 man or didn't talk to Schmidt specifically, that's
16 one thing; if he's denying the whole bit, that's
17 conceivable.

18 MR. LIEBELER: No, he doesn't deny the whole
19 bit, he just denies that he was the one that gave
20 that story out.

21 MR. LEHRER: I see -- I don't know what it
22 could be in that.

23 MR. LIEBELER: Can you think of any reason
24 why Schmidt might be lying about it?

25 MR. LEHRER: No -- he had nothing to gain by

for state
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for state
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1 it. It was just a story, and my goodness, we were
2 working -- I mean -- there were a multitude of
3 stories and a multitude of checking out and we were
4 deluged just like everybody was with rumors and things
5 of this and that and he would have no reason to write
6 something that wasn't true. The fact is, he didn't even
7 have his name on it, so he didn't have anything to
8 gain by it.

9 MR. LIEBELER: All right, thank you very
10 much.

11 MR. LEHRER: Thank you.

12 MR. LIEBELER: We appreciate your cooperation.

13 MR. LEHRER: All right.

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(Signature of the witness.)

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