



November at the Carousel

Libretto

An Opera in Three Acts

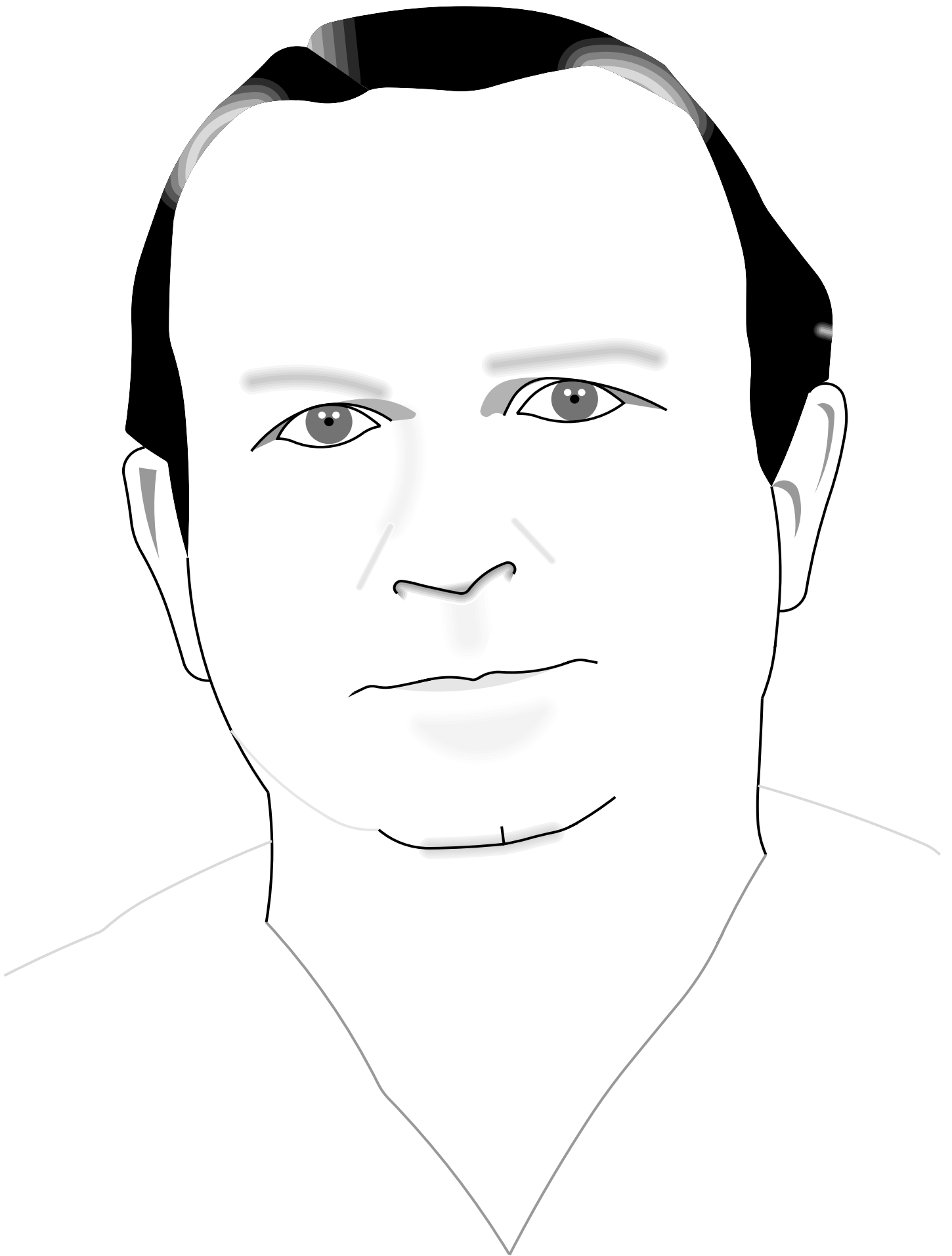
Text and music by Peter Billam

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Orchestra

- Strings :** First and second violins, violas, violoncelli, basses.
- Woodwind :** Flute (doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets in Bb (one doubling Eb), two bassoons (one doubling contra).
- Brass :** Two trumpets, two trombones, two horns in F.
- Saxophones :** Saxophone quartet; soprano, alto, tenor and baritone.
- Percussion :** Piano, one percussionist (snaredrum, triangle, 2 timpani).

Scenes

Act One

- Scene One** Jack Ruby's office at the Carousel Club
- Scene Two** On stage at the Carousel Club
- Scene Three** At table at the Carousel Club
- Scene Four** The same table after closing time

Act Two

- Scene One** The Grassy Knoll
- Scene Two** The Texas Cinema
- Scene Three** Inside Olsen's Car
- Scene Four** A Corridor in the Police Station
- Scene Five** The Garage in the Police Station

Act Three

- Scene One** Jack Ruby's trial
- Scene Two** The Warren Commission Hearing

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Cast

Rose Cheramie	One of Jack Ruby's working girls, Mezzo.
Bodyguard	Works for Jack Ruby, Latin-american, Bass.
Jack Ruby	The owner of the Carousel Night Club, Tenor.
Harry Olsen	Dallas Police Officer, Baritone.
Announcer	Works at the Carousel Club, Tenor.
Little Lynne	Lynnette Carlin, stripper at the Carousel Club, Soprano.
Lee Harvey Oswald	Works for the CIA, Tenor.
Roscoe White	With the Dallas Police since two weeks, formerly CIA, Baritone.
Richard Cain	Works for the CIA, Mafia, and Chicago police, Tenor.
Charles Nicoletti	Gangster from Chicago, Bass.
'Nick' McDonald	Maurice McDonald, Dallas Police Officer, Baritone.
George Applin	Cinema-goer, Bass
Kathy Kay Coleman	Olsen's girl friend, formerly stripper at the Carousel, Soprano.
James Hosty	Works for the FBI, Bass-baritone.
Reporter	Tenor
Jesse Curry	Dallas Police Chief, not in on the conspiracy, Baritone.
Charles Batchelor	Assistant Police Chief, Dallas Police, Bass.
Charles Brown	Dallas Police Officer, not in on the conspiracy, Tenor.
Ike Pappas	Radio newsman, works for WNEW, based in New York, Bass.
L. C. Graves	Detective in the Dallas Police, Baritone.
D. R. Archer	Detective in the Dallas Police Auto Theft Bureau, Baritone.
Judge Joe Brown	Judge from Dallas, Tenor.
Melvyn Belli	Lawyer from San Francisco, Bass-Baritone.
Bill Decker	Dallas County Sherrif, Bass
Earle Warren	Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Baritone.
Gerald Ford	Congressman, Baritone.
Elmer Moore	Works for the Secret Service, Tenor.

Non-Singing Parts

2nd Bodyguard, Beverly Oliver (*KOAP 86*), Abraham Zapruder (*KOAP 192*), the Black Dog Man (*KOAP 192*), the Umbrella Man (Louis Steven Witt) (*KOAP 188*), Gordon Arnold (*KOAP 32*), Newsman Robert MacNeil (*KOAP 49*), Secret Service Agents (*KOAP 51-57*), John Brewer (*SLHO 146*), Detective Jim R. Leavelle (*SLHO 196*), Joe Tonahill (*TJR 183*), a stenographer, police, press, TV.

Possible Sharings of Minor Singing Parts

- Bodyguard, Charles Nicoletti, George Applin, Charles Batchelor, Bill Decker; Bass.
- Little Lynne, Kathy Kay Coleman; Soprano. Little Lynne's striptease (Act I Scene II) should be performed by a separate non-singing artist.
- Announcer, Richard Cain, Charles Brown, Elmer Moore; Tenor.
- Roscoe White, James Hosty, Melvyn Belli; Bass-Baritone.
- Jesse Curry, Earle Warren; Baritone.
- Nick McDonald, D. R. Archer, Gerald Ford; Baritone.

Frontispiece

The frontispiece portrait of Jack Ruby, and the self-portrait of the composer at the end, were both drawn by Peter Billam directly into Postscript, using the Postscript line-drawing subroutines www.pjb.com.au/comp/free/line_drawing.ps.txt and a text editor `/usr/bin/vi`. The portrait of Jack Ruby was taken from his mugshot after he had been charged with Oswald's murder. The self-portrait of Peter Billam was taken from a pencil sketch drawn in the mirror of the Kafé Kara in Hobart in February 2000.

November at the Carousel – Libretto

Act One, Scene One; Jack Ruby's Office

(CONS 577, KOAP 111, SLHO 174-179, COS 42-44) A varnished wooden desk with a phone, a metal filing cabinet, Rose Cheramie waiting in a chair, two bodyguards behind her.

Rose Hey, can I go to the bathroom ? *(pause)* I'm not even carrying, what' you on about ? *(The bodyguards smile. Pause; Rose gets up)* I need to go to the bathroom.

Bodyguard Sit down, Rose *(she sits. pause. Ruby enters.)*

Rose Sparky . . .

Ruby Ah, Rose, I'm glad you're here.

Rose Sparky, I need to go to the bathroom, and they won't let me.

Ruby I bet you're looking forward to Louisiana, Rose ! Been tough, the last few weeks, you'll have a good time when you get there, I know.

Rose I just taste to see if it's good, I don't mess around.

Ruby You do a good job for Houston, Rose, you always get the stuff there; 'fact I think you probably deserve more of it . . . *(pause)*

Rose Can I go to the bathroom ?

Ruby But before you go to Louisiana, Rose, there's one extra little thing we need you to do this time. *(pause)*

Rose Go on then, Sparky, tell me what it is.

Ruby It's very easy, Rose, it's nothing at all, you don't even have to **do** anything, you just **be** there at the right time.

Rose What's going to happen there, Sparky ?

Ruby What you will **see**, Rose, is there's this guy running away, and then a cop calls out to him, and then the guy pulls out a gun and shoots the cop. That's what you'll see.

Rose What happens to the guy ?

Ruby Well, the other cops have to shoot him, don't they; but that's OK, because you say you saw him shoot the first cop first, didn't you.

Rose But he didn't shoot the first cop first.

Ruby That's OK, because you're a witness, Rose, and you tell them that he **did** shoot the first cop first.

Rose But that's murder, Sparky !

- Ruby* That's not murder, Rose, it's the police, it's completely legal.
- Rose* I'm not getting involved with murder.
- Ruby* Rose, it's only a lie, you tell them all the time. And the guy is scum ! He's better off dead ! *(pause)*
- Rose* And what happens to the first cop ? That the guy is supposed to have shot ? *(pause)* Do they shoot him too ? Shit, Sparky !
- Ruby* Look, Rose, to go to Louisiana I need someone I can trust.
- Rose* I'll run drugs for you, Sparky, but I draw the line at murder !
- Ruby* Listen here, Rose ! or you'll not be running drugs for me no more, 'cause I need someone I can **trust**, Rose, someone who can **do** what needs to be **done** ! What is this, bitch ? You're a junkie ! A junkie, and all of a sudden you can't tell a lie ? What is this !
- Rose* *(pause)* I'm sorry, I can't do this, Sparky, not with murder, it's different. Try Helen . . .
- Ruby* Helen's a screwball, Rose, no-one would believe her. Look, this is so easy for you, it's not murder, you just **say** you **saw** the **guy shoot** the **cop**. *(pause)* Listen here, Rose – if you can't do this, if you can't do this thing, that means we can't work together any more, Rose. Is that what you want ?
- Rose* *(crying)* I **can't** do it, not murder, I can't **do** that. Maybe Helen will. *(pause)* I want to go to the bathroom. *(pause)* Sparky . . .
- Ruby* *(to the bodyguards)* So give her what she wants.
- Bodyguard* Come on, Rose . . . *(they lead her out, crying. Ruby takes a couple of pills from his desk and swallows them. Enter Olsen)*
- Olsen* She didn't like the idea.
- Ruby* Bitch !
- Olsen* Too highly strung. Do the goons know she needs an accident now ?
- Ruby* I told them. Another junkie that will never tell a lie again !
- Olsen* Hey, Jack, in a job like this, if we can't arrange a little perjury we're going to look pretty stupid.
- Ruby* *(swaps suit jacket for his stage jacket)* We'll have to use Helen.
- Olsen* What's she like as a witness ?
- Ruby* *(combs hair)* She's a crackpot. A complete screwball. But she's very desperate.
- Olsen* They're the most reliable.
- Ruby* I gotta go on stage. Tell Larry to get Helen in. Helen from the Eatwell Café.
- Olsen* Oh, that Helen. *(they look at each other)*

Ruby Yeah. *(they exit.)*

Act One, Scene Two; The Stage of the Carousel Club

(SLHO 175,176,177) A small semi-circular stage, with three cat-walks leading out between the tables. Drum roll.

Announcer *(off-stage)* Ladies and Gentlemen, your host, Jack, Ruby ! *(The band plays a fanfare; Ruby enters through a curtain at the back to the stage and takes the microphone from its stand.)*

Ruby Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope you've enjoyed your evening at the Carousel Club; this is your host, Jack Ruby, the audience is full of important people tonight, and I've enjoyed having you here.

Yes, it's continuous shows at the Carousel Club, and on stage it's glamorous girls girls girls all the way ! This is your Master of Ceremonies, Jack Ruby, and I've enjoyed having them here too. Every one of them ! You don't believe me ? Ah, November at the Carousel, been a busy month, and it's not finished yet !

Some of you, ooh I recognise you, you've already sat through five or six of these girls showing you, oohh, I swear I don't know how you manage. I bet you're just itching to . . . well don't go home yet !

Get yourself another drink and settle down for the climax of the evening ! You don't believe me ? You've seen girls before, but this is the most, the most sophisticated, the most risqué, the most provocative, the most delightful. This is the top of the bill, Little Lynne will show you what you came here for ! Little Lynne, luscious, lascivious, and beautiful beyond describing ! Gentlemen, put your hands together to welcome our star turn, Little Lynne ! *(enter Lynne. She does her striptease act.)*

Act One, Scene Three; At a Table in the Carousel Club

(KOAP 109, NAMED 62-63) Ruby, Oswald, Cain, Nicoletti, and White are sitting round a table.

Ruby Lee, I want you to meet some friends of mine from Chicago, Charles and Richard. This is Lee Oswald, of the CIA . . . Lee, my friends here need to be on the top floor of the Depository on Friday, they need a good view, and they don't want to be disturbed.

Oswald They need a good view ?

Ruby When the motorcade goes through Dealy Plaza, about 12:30, whenever it is; that's the zero hour, that's the start signal for all the rest of the operation.

These guys have the radios; they give the timing for the whole job, at the Trade Mart, and everywhere else.

Oswald Uh-huh.

Ruby So, you work there, and we need you to hang around in the lunch room to make sure no-one goes up the stairs and disturbs them.

Oswald Hey, I don't even get to see the motorcade !

Ruby Oh, Lee, it's important you don't get photographed at a window. You are one of the conspirators, after all . . . There'll be cameras going off everywhere with the President driving past, so you stay away from windows. My friends just need some peace and quiet to do their work, and then to get down the stairs and out the back afterwards. That's why you're working in the Book Depository, Lee; someone that won't attract attention has to guard the stairs. You can do that, Lee ?

Oswald Of course I can. I guess I just wish I could be doing something more important for the operation.

Ruby But you are, Lee ! (*Cain and Nicoletti look at Ruby*) I mean, in an operation with as many people as this, everyone is given a role, and they all fit into the plan and in the end who knows who is the most important ? It could turn out to be someone no-one would have expected ! Isn't that right, boys ?

Nicoletti You put that very clearly, Sparky.

Ruby Yeah . . . O.K. now, the getaway . . . twenty minutes after the motorcade, Lee, you come to my place, J.D. will be there, we wait for news from the Trade Mart, then J.D. drives you to the plane, and David takes you to Mexico. O.K. ?

Oswald So it's your place, twenty minutes after. O.K.

Ruby It gives you time to take the bus, just like you would normally, nothing unusual, nothing suspicious, O.K. ?

Oswald O.K.

Ruby Hey, Beverly, (*beckons*) come over here and meet my friends ! Beverly, these are friends of mine from Chicago I want you to make feel real welcome in Dallas. Beverly sings at the Colony Club next door. You know Lee, don't you. Hey, Lynne (*beckons*), Lynne, this is Lee Oswald of the CIA, I know you'll like him, and some friends of mine from Chicago.

Lynne Delighted to meet you, Lee.

Oswald Likewise, ma'am.

Lynne Hey Roscoe, where's Geneva ?

White Ah, Geneva can't be here, she ain't feeling well.

Lynne Hey Sparky, is Rose around ? I feel like having a really good time !

Ruby I'll fix you up, Lynne. Poor Rose, she wasn't feeling so good, she couldn't even see straight, I had to give her the day off.

Lynne Oh Sparky, you're so good to your girls ! And you C.I.A. heroes, you're so strong and mysterious, you know so many things, I bet there's things you could tell me I don't even know yet . . . (*laughs*),

Oswald I don't think so, maam.

Act One, Scene Four; The same table, after closing time.

The club lights are dimmed, leaving just this table illuminated. Ruby, Cain, Nicoletti, Olsen, White.

Ruby So what d'you think of the patsy ?

Nicoletti He's a jerk.

Cain Tense.

Nicoletti He's a spook, but he's a jerk.

Cain He knows there's something he doesn't know, but he doesn't know what.

Ruby He still thinks the job's at the Trade Mart.

Nicoletti He's a spook. Who knows what they think.

Olsen Who cares. I'll shoot him myself after he shoots a cop ; J.D., in fact (*pause*)

Cain That's good. (*smiles*) That's very tidy.

Olsen We have to keep in mind the story. The story is what's important, what must come out of all this. The story is; Lee is a commie agent, shoots the President, O.K. ? He kills J.D. resisting arrest, so I have to shoot him. To look good, it's **necessary** that he kill J.D. So I'll do that too.

Cain Very professional.

Olsen We have a witness who'll say the right things.

Nicoletti Should have two.

Ruby We're getting another.

Nicoletti It's good. Especially if Lee co-operates . . .

White Yeah. When Lee finds out it was in the Plaza instead, he'll get suspicious. Because he betrayed the Trade Mart to the Bureau, and he'll work out that we must have found out about that, so he'll know he's in big trouble. I mean, from us.

Cain He won't turn up at your place, Sparky. Will he have a gun ?

Ruby He doesn't take it to work at the Bookstore.

Cain You're a Company man, what will he do, Rocks ?

- White* He might run to the airfield on his own, but we set up the airfield, so most likely he'll go to his meeting place and just wait for a contact. For him, that's the Texas Cinema, in Jefferson Boulevard.
- Nicoletti* He'll go home, pick up the gun.
- Cain* Where's his home ?
- Ruby* On the way to the cinema.
- Nicoletti* Well, then.
- Cain* That's where he'll go. Is he being followed ?
- White* Sure, we've got Mary Bledsoe on the bus; he knows her, but she's just an old landlady, she runs a Company house, she's beyond suspicion.
- Ruby* So if he does get off the bus, I'll send J.D. to pick him up at home, give him a lift; he might take it.
- Olsen* If he goes to the cinema; well preferably he shoots a cop there; if not, we have to arrest him, and Jack will have to shoot him later.
- Cain* Why arrest him ? It's so messy. Why not just shoot him straight away ?
- Olsen* **No**, this is not Dealey Plaza, this is **afterwards**, this is not the job, it's the cover-up. It has to look good.
- Cain* But it looks great ! He just shot a cop ! I mean you **are** going to do that anyway, aren't you ? J.D.'s so stupid and he knows so much . . .
- Olsen* Sure, J.D. must get hit, 'cause that's part of the story, and we have to stick to the story. But that's not at the cinema. We can't shoot Lee just because he's a murder suspect !
- Nicoletti* You can't shoot him why ?
- Ruby* My friend, we can all remember things which didn't look good, but that wasn't Lee Oswald. This one has to look good, we understand that.
- Nicoletti* So make him shoot a cop. Corner him, give him targets, spin it out, he'll crack. He's a spook but he's only a jerk.
- Olsen* Alright. So, Gentlemen, this is what we have . . . If Lee is with J.D., I shoot them; that's the simplest. If they're separated, I shoot J.D. anyway, he's too stupid to live. Then we corner Lee. Then it depends. If Lee shoots a cop, we shoot him, and that's great, I mean that's the story, what more d'you want ? *(they laugh)* So we spin it out, but if Lee doesn't shoot a cop, we have to arrest him; then Jack will kill him before he talks in public.
- Cain* Could all come down to you, Sparky.
- Ruby* I'll be there !
- Nicoletti* More than be there, Sparky.
- White* You're the last in line, Jack. If he crosses that line and opens his mouth, – I don't want to think about that, I don't even want to think about that !

- Cain* This is one you have to guarantee, Jack.
- Ruby* I guarantee that job, he won't get past me. What' you on about ?
- Nicoletti* Good. *(pause)* Hey, this is hard work, this planning.
- White* This is the hardest job I ever been on – when your own President is a security risk, doesn't get any bigger than this . . .
- Cain* Two days to go, and we'll all be heroes, with friends in power.
- Nicoletti* Maybe three or four days if Sparky has to clean up the patsy. You gonna be O.K., Sparky ?
- Ruby* I take care of myself.
- Nicoletti* I'm sure you do.

Act Two, Scene One; The Grassy Knoll

(KOAP 34, 37, 50-57, 188-191, 210, SHLO 114, 191, COS 60-70) A grassy bank sloping upwards towards a wall of chest height behind which is a stockade fence. At the upstage end of the wall there is a concrete pillar. Beverly Oliver is downstage-left with her movie camera. Abraham Zapruder climbs onto the pillar with his movie camera. The Black Dog Man appears at the downstage end of the wall, and a gunman appears behind the stockade fence. The motorcade becomes audible, and Abraham Zapruder starts filming it, panning slowly from stage left to stage right.

A shot rings out (frame 150). The Umbrella Man shakes the umbrella vigorously up and down. At frame 188, the Black Dog Man shoots, hitting President Kennedy in the throat. Gordon Arnold throws himself to the ground. About frame 230, two more shots from stage right. At frame 313, the gunman behind the stockade fence fires the fatal shot. The Umbrella Man stops shaking the umbrella up and down. One more shot rings out.

The Umbrella Man folds his umbrella and sits down, chatting with an associate (KOAP 50, 189). The Black Dog Man vanishes behind the stockade fence (KOAP 56-57), leaving a coke bottle on the wall. A platoon of Secret Service Agents run across from stage left to upper stage right. One of them kicks Gordon Arnold, takes the film from his camera, and rushes up behind the wall and disappears behind the stockade fence. Another picks up the coke bottle. A crowd of bystanders, including Newsman Robert MacNeil, rush up the knoll and mill around, peering over the stockade fence.

Ruby enters stage left, walks across to the downstage end of the wall; Robert MacNeil turns away from the fence and walks off stage left. Ruby continues up to the stockade fence, and peers over.

Act Two, Scene Two; The Texas Cinema

(SHLO 150-153, COS 115-117) The film 'War is Hell' is showing. A couple of dozen police come in with John Brewer through the exit doors at the front; the lights go on,

blinking out the screen, but the soundtrack continues. Oswald is near the back row in the centre, Ruby is in the back row on the right; there are various other moviegoers, including George Applin, who is sitting close to Ruby. John Brewer points Oswald out to the police. The police move along the rows from the front, inspecting the ID of all the moviegoers and asking them to leave. Eventually they get to Oswald;

McDonald Stand up.

Oswald (he jumps up) Well this is it ! (Oswald knocks Officer Nick McDonald back with a punch, pulls a gun and makes to shoot him. McDonald puts up a hand as if to protect himself, and the gun fails to go off.)

Applin (crouches down between the seats. To Ruby) Buddy, you'd better move. There is a gun. (Ruby just looks at Applin. Oswald is wrestled to the ground and is arrested.)

Oswald Police brutality ! Police brutality ! I am not resisting arrest !

McDonald Kill the President, will you ! (Oswald is bundled out the the back of the auditorium.)

Act Two, Scene Three; Inside Olsen's Car

(CONS 481, MKPK 169) The car is parked in the courtyard of Simon's Garage, about one o'clock on Saturday morning, with Olsen in the driver's seat and Kathy in the back. Kathy spots Ruby outside and waves at him; Ruby comes over and gets in the front passenger's seat.

Ruby Is she in on this ?

Olsen She is here as a witness, she is trusted, she will not intervene, but what she hears, others hear. This is not just between us two, Jack, not just between us three.

Ruby So what the fuck happened ? He pulled the gun and didn't shoot ? Why didn't he pull the trigger ?

Olsen He did pull the trigger ! But it didn't go off, Nick put his hand up and got it stuck in the firing pin !

Ruby What ! Ah, shit ! Lucky like that should be illegal. But he tried to shoot, you could have shot him anyway.

Olsen So could you, Jack, but the plan was if he didn't shoot a cop we arrest him and that's what happened. (pause) There's always some lucky ones. Always some lucky ones; your goons pushed Rose out the car and guess what, now she's in hospital and expected to live.

Ruby The fucking jerks ! They know nothing ! The next time they push her out the car, they run her over afterwards.

Olsen Nah, the next time, they shoot her in the head first !

- Ruby* Yeah. Then run over the head ! It looks better ! (*they laugh. Kathy seems upset.*) So now where is the son of a bitch ?
- Olsen* In Homicide, Fritz's office at the moment.
- Ruby* So clean him up, it's easy – shot while trying to escape through a tenth floor window, you know the deal, you've done it often enough.
- Olsen* But that wasn't Lee Harvey Oswald. This is different. We can't do this one. This is part of the cover-up, not part of the operation, the idea is to **reduce** suspicion, not increase it. We can't do this one, Jack, you have to do it.
- Ruby* Oh, so it's OK if the heat avoid suspicion provided it falls on my family, huh ?
- Olsen* What family ? You're just an honest night club owner, you have no connections with anyone. Hoover himself guarantees that. And don't forget you guaranteed this job, Jack, and you guaranteed it to your family.
- Ruby* But the son of a bitch is surrounded by cops ! Reduce suspicion ? You think I'm supposed to wander in and kill him and it not look suspicious ?
- Olsen* It's easy; we bring in the newsmen and the T.V. !
- Ruby* What ?
- Olsen* On Sunday morning, we transfer him to the County Jail, there'll be newsmen in the garage to see him get into the car. Batchelor will be in charge of security. It looks like you came in with the newsmen, and **that's**, where **you**, will kill him at point blank range, Jack, because if Oswald lives, everyone will know about Charles Flynn and your friends at the Bureau.
- Ruby* (*furious*) What a shame, Harry, and she's such a pretty girl, such pretty ears she has !
- Olsen* Don't waste your time, Jack, she knew before I did.
- Ruby* (*stunned*) Shit . . .
- Olsen* The Bureau, Jack. They're so keen to see the last of Lee that they told him about your friends there, Jack, and how helpful you've been to them; well; you can imagine how that would go down, if Lee opens his mouth . . . so if Lee lives, he opens his mouth, and you die . . . (*pause*) Him or you, Jack. Sunday morning.
- Ruby* They play rough.
- Olsen* They didn't leave it to chance.
- Ruby* (*to himself*) I'm not clean enough. I've walked into a trap.
- Olsen* (*suddenly relaxed*) OK, so it's on TV. OK, so you get arrested. Safest place to be, man ! No inconvenient newsmen, plenty of dope, plenty of boys, and people there who would respect you, Jack, after what you're going to do, you're gonna be a hero; it doesn't get any bigger than that, Jack, a job like this, and on live T.V. ! You're going to be a hero ! And a hero with friends in

power.

- Ruby* A hero in jail, while you're off fucking your way round the world !
- Olsen* We'll be running scared, man ! You'll be safer in jail than we are ! We're all in this together, Jack, and not just us three, and you're the one that has to do the job ! You guaranteed this job, Jack !
- Ruby* Shit . . .
- Kathy* They should cut this guy inch by inch into ribbons.
- Olsen* The son of a bitch doesn't deserve to live ! He killed the President, remember !
- Kathy* Where I come from he would have been dragged through the streets and hanged !
- Olsen* They should cut this guy inch by inch into ribbons.
- Kathy* He should be dragged through the streets and hanged !
- Olsen* Him or you, Jack. Point blank range, on Sunday morning.
- Ruby* You ain't seen me close ? The closer I go, the better I get. I'm good close up. What 'you on about ?
- Olsen* So this is how we do it. Oswald comes out of the office, he turns right, round the corner into the garage, you just wait there behind the corner. Point-blank range, you never have to move, he just walks into it.
- Ruby* That's no good ! I have to come at him from his left side.
- Olsen* But this way you're hiding behind the corner !
- Ruby* Don't you tell me how to do it ! You fucking baby ! You ever been up close ? You can't do it ! Three shots ! Stomach, heart, head, from the left side, angled downwards.

The stomach shot is great. You line it up right, it goes through everything that's in there, spleen, liver, kidney, it's fatal on its own, it hurts like hell – it's a speciality. Sometimes you just leave them to die like that.

Then the shot to the heart goes through both lungs too, then the head bows forward you can line the whole thing up from the top to the brainstem with just one shot. You must time it right, so the gun's in place just as the head comes down.

And to do that, you must see it, you must see the insides, the secret of being up close is to **see** the **insides**, you line them up, you shoot **through** them. You must see it before it happens, before you start moving, you see the whole thing, so fucking clearly that it takes place **because** you've seen it. So don't try to tell me which fucking side to come from, you don't know the first thing about it !

- Olsen* (pause) OK, Jack, you come at his left side.
- Ruby* Make sure the T.V. lights are in his eyes straight away. I'm behind the newsmen, behind the lights; as he turns right, he'll want to look right, away from the lights. Then I push through the crowd; he won't even see me till I'm up close and stomach, heart, head.
- Olsen* OK, we'll make sure the crowd's not too tight – security reasons . . . (smiles)
- Ruby* Then everybody jumps on top and beats the shit out of me.
- Olsen* No, Jack, out of him ! (they laugh) You're not in this alone, Jack. (pause)
- Ruby* Hey. This mustn't look premeditated at all, from my point of view, I mean, cause that would make it murder ! This has to look spontaneous, just a violent fit of rage.
- Olsen* They'll believe that of you, Jack.
- Ruby* Don't make fun of me, Harry ! Tom Howard told me, he's a good man, he hasn't lost a client yet. We have to make a reason I could just be walking by there at the time, and not just hanging round H.Q. because I normally am . . . I have to have a reason to be in the neighbourhood.
- Olsen* Western Union is pretty close, you could cable someone some money ?
- Ruby* You want my friends mixed up in this ?
- Olsen* One of your girls is OK, you're just an honest night-club owner.
- Ruby* Yeah, and we'll have been closed for two days, they could probably use the money. (pause) Especially the junkies.
- Olsen* I'll talk to Little Lynne, she'll phone you Sunday morning to ask for some money for the rent or something.
- Ruby* That son of a bitch Curry, if he sees me there, he's the Chief, not Batchelor . . .
- Olsen* Curry won't be there, Jack, cause he'll be taking an urgent phone call from the Mayor. Batchelor will be in charge, the lights will be there, Oswald will be there, it will all be just perfect. Just provided you're there . . .
- Ruby* You know damn well I'll be there !

Act Two, Scene Four; A Corridor in the Police Station

(*SLHO 169, 185, KOAP 105, CONS 480, TJR 130, DOAP 466-470.*) A lobby leads stage left and right, and a corridor leads upstage from the centre; a door on the stage-left side of this corridor is labelled "Homicide". The lobby is filled with reporters, cameramen, police and Jack Ruby. The centre corridor contains only police.

Hosty (to the policeman guarding the centre corridor) James Hosty, FBI. (he is allowed through, knocks on the "Homicide" door, and Fritz lets him in.)

Reporter (to Ruby) Was that Sheriff Decker ?

Ruby No, that was not Sheriff Decker, that was Captain Fritz.

Reporter Who is Captain Fritz ? How do you spell it ?

Ruby You spell it W-i-l-l F-r-i-t-z, he is the Homicide Captain.

Curry (enters down the central corridor)

Reporter (to Ruby) Who's that ?

Ruby That's Police Chief Curry.

Reporter Chief Curry, has Oswald been mistreated during the interrogation ?

Curry No, certainly not.

Reporter Then why is he hidden ?

Curry Well the interrogation is still in progress.

Reporter Does Oswald have links with any Cuban expatriate organisations ?

Curry I'm unaware of the current status of the interrogation, that's what I'm going to find out, but it's known he is a member of the "Free Cuba Committee".

Ruby (shouts out) That's the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee"

Reporter Until you produce the suspect in public, those rumors of mistreatment and even torture will continue, and that could damage the whole case against him. Can you please let us see the suspect ?

Curry Ah, well, I'm not sure of the current status of the interrogation, but, ah, I will see what can be arranged. If you'll excuse me . . . (he enters the "Homicide" office)

Ruby (to a reporter) Hey, you should visit my club, I'll buy you a drink on the house, great girls there, you'll really enjoy yourself ! (hands him a business card)

Reporter Ah, sure, thanks ! (Oswald appears from the "Homicide" office, handcuffed and escorted by two policemen) Did you shoot the President ?

Oswald I didn't shoot anybody, no sir. I'm just a patsy !

Reporter Well why'd they arrest you ?

Oswald They've brought me in because I lived in the Soviet Union ! I need legal representation ! Can somebody get me a lawyer ? (Oswald is shoved back in the "Homicide" office. Exit several newsmen, running)

Act Two, Scene Five; The Garage in the Police Station

(CONS 483-4, TJR 143, 186-7, KOAP 106, RTJ 200-203, SLHO 192-201, DOAP 721-726, COS 171-177) From centre stage, car ramps lead up stage left and stage right. A police car is just visible up the ramp stage-right. The TV lights are turned on. Ruby arrives behind the TV cameras.

Charles Brown Sir, what's Sparky doing here ?

Batchelor Everything's in order, except you're not in your car. Will you get back to your car ?

Charles Brown Sparky should not be here, sir.

Batchelor Don't worry about that, Brown, I'm in charge of security arrangements here.

Charles Brown I'd like to formally request a review of those security arrangements.

Batchelor National security is at stake here, and I'll be treating disobedience accordingly ! Brown, you'll get back to your car !

Charles Brown goes up the ramp stage-right. Fritz appears out the jail office, looks around, gestures for the others to follow. Oswald appears, his right hand handcuffed to Leavelle and his left elbow held by Graves.

Pappas (to his microphone) There's Oswald. That's the prisoner, wearing the light sweater. He has changed from his T-shirt. Being moved out toward an armored car. *(Ruby starts pushing through the crowd of cameramen)* There's the prisoner. *(to Oswald)* Have you anything to say in your defence ? *(Oswald sees Ruby, and tries to stride ahead of Leavelle and Graves to try to reach the car. The car starts driving down the ramp from stage right. Ruby shoots Oswald in the stomach)*

Oswald Ow ! *(Oswald doubles over and slumps to the floor. The car hits Ruby in the leg and knocks him over as it brakes to a halt. As Ruby falls, Graves siezes the gun.)*

Pappas Oswald has been shot ! Oswald has been shot ! Oswald has been shot ! *(All the nearest policemen jump on top of Oswald and Ruby and there is a wild scuffle. Graves appears from out of the scrum holding the gun.)*

Ruby You all know me, I'm Jack Ruby !

Police Everybody stay back ! Oswald is shot ! Everybody stay back ! *(Ruby is handcuffed, dragged to his feet and led out of the melée)*

Graves Jack, you son of a bitch, you shot Oswald ! Why did you do it ?

Ruby I had to do it; you couldn't do it. I did it because you couldn't do it. *(Oswald is moved onto a stretcher)*

Archer Jack, I think you killed him.

Ruby I hope the son of a bitch dies ! I intended to shoot him three times. I hope I killed the son of a bitch ! *(Ruby is led out through the office door. Enter Curry, notices the disarray, sees Oswald on the stretcher, is mortified.)*

Act Three, Scene One; Jack Ruby's Trial

The defence lawyers are Melvyn Belli and Joe Tonahill.

Judge Brown I call upon Melvyn Belli to present the case for the defence.

Belli Your honour, my client pleads not guilty by reason of insanity. No one denies, your honour, that my client shot and killed Lee Oswald; he did it on prime time T.V.. The bullet passed through the left lung, the spleen, both the vena cava and the aorta, the two major blood vessels in the abdomen, the liver, and the right kidney. It was a freak, lucky shot, a freak shot, but a woe-ful wound, inflicted by a violent man, a man with a long history of violence, a man subject to uncontrollable rages. Imagine the daily fury with which my client lives, to be a Jew boy in a Jew-hating hole like Dallas !

Ruby Hey !

Judge Brown Silence !

Belli The defence will demonstrate that my client is afflicted by a recently discovered disease by the name of Psychomotor Epilepsy, a disease causing spasms of violent rage. This is what caused the **un**predictable, **un**planned, **sponta**-neous outburst of violent fury that my client experienced on the morning of Sunday 24th of November. A number of other medical conditions contribute to triggering this Psychomotor Epilepsy, and my client also suffers from vil-lage idiocy,

Ruby What ?

Belli latent homosexuality, and gonhorrea !

Ruby Hey, what is this !

Judge Brown Silence in court !

Act Three, Scene Two; The Warren Commision Hearing

(SHLO 216-217, KOAP 93, CONS 454-456, LIFE 26-27, MKPK 155, 195-207, 325, NAMED 26, RTJ 232-238) An austere little jury room with a sink stage-right, a long narrow table, and a door stage-left. Ruby is sitting at the stage-right end of the table, wearing sandals and a white jumper with several buttons undone; Decker and another policeman are standing behind him.

Decker I bet you're looking forward to this, Sparky. Your big opportunity. *(draws revolver, holds it so that Ruby can see it, and clicks off the safety catch)* Be a man, and die . . . You wouldn't die a man, though . . . *(slowly aims revolver at Ruby's groin; pauses, then clicks the safety catch back on and puts the revolver back in holster. Enter Moore, Tonahill, Ford, Warren, and a stenog-rapher. They sit down. Ruby is terribly tense.)*

Warren The hearing is open. You are Mr Jack Ruby ?

- Ruby* Yes, sir.
- Warren* On the morning of the 24th of November you shot and killed Lee Harvey Oswald in the basement of the Dallas Police Station ?
- Ruby* Yes, sir.
- Warren* Mr Ruby; had anybody ever requested to you that you do this ?
- Ruby* No one, **requested** me, to do anything.
- Warren* And had you spoken to anyone about your intention to shoot Oswald ?
- Ruby* I never spoke to anyone about, **attempting**, to do anything . . .
- Ford* Did any underworld person make any effort to contact you before the shooting ?
- Ruby* No underworld person made an **effort** to contact me.
- Ford* Was it premeditated at all ?
- Ruby* It all happened that Sunday morning . . .
- Warren* Mr Ruby, can you tell us, in your own words, why, you killed Oswald ?
(*pause*) Just tell us your story.
- Ruby* The last thing I read Mrs. Kennedy'd have to come back for a trial to Dallas for Lee Harvey Oswald, I don't know what bug got a hold of me . . . Suddenly the feeling, the emotional feeling came within me that someone owed this debt to our beloved President to save her the ordeal of coming back. I had the gun in my right hip pocket, and impulsively, if that is the correct word here, I saw him and that would be all I can say . . . I think I used the words 'You killed my President, you rat'. The next thing I know, I was down on the floor.
- Warren* Thank you, Mr Ruby. (*to Ford*) Congressman, do you have any . . .
- Ruby* There is more I could say. I want to tell the truth, and I can't tell it here. I want to take a lie detector test. Is there any way you can get me to Washington ?
- Warren* I beg your pardon ?
- Ruby* Is there any way of getting me to Washington ?
- Warren* No, I don't know of any; I will be glad to talk to your counsel about what the situation is, Mr Ruby, when we
- Ruby* I would like to request that I go to Washington and take all the lie detector tests that I have to take. I want to tell the truth, and I can't tell it **here**.
(*pause*) I can't tell it here ! My life is in danger here !
- Warren* We have taken the testimony of two or three hundred people, I would imagine, here in Dallas without going to Washington.
- Ruby* But those people aren't Jack Ruby.

Warren No, they weren't.

Ruby They weren't.

Decker Why not be a man and (*pause*) speak up ? These men have come a long way to give you (*pause*) your big opportunity . . .

Ruby Unfortunately for me, for me giving the people the opportunity to get in power, because of the act I committed, that's put a lot of people in jeopardy of their lives. (*pause*) Doesn't register with you, does it ?

Warren No, I don't understand that . . .

Ruby "I realise it is a most terrible thing I have done, and it was a stupid thing, but I was just carried away emotionally." Do you follow that ?

Warren Yes; I do indeed, every word.

Ruby Well I must be a great actor !

Ford (*to Warren*) This guy is unstable, he's a nut, just like Oswald. One kills the other ! And the story he told us before, seems reasonable . . .

Warren (*to Ford*) I have to concur with my colleague Judge Brown; this man is completely unstable. I assume there's no danger ?

Ford (*to Decker*) You can control the situation ?

Decker (*to Ford*) Quick as a shot, sir. (*Decker and the other policeman remove the safety catches on their revolvers*)

Ruby Boys, I'm in a tough spot, I tell you that . . .

Warren (*aloud, to Ford*) Congressman, do you have anything further ?

Ruby You can get more out of me. Let's not break up too soon. Mister Bill Decker said be a man and speak up. I am making a statement now that I may not live the next hour when I walk out of this room. Do I sound sober enough to you as I say this ?

Warren You do, you sound entirely sober.

Ruby There is a certain organisation here, Chief Justice Warren,

Warren There is indeed, Mr Ruby.

Ruby If it takes my life at this moment to say it, and Bill Decker said 'be a man and say it', there is a John Birch Society right now in activity, and Edwin Walker is one of the top men of this organisation. Take it for what it is worth, Chief Justice Warren.

Moore You recall that when I talked to you, there were certain things I asked you not to tell me, at the time, for certain reasons, and I respected your position on that and asked you not to tell me certain things.

Ruby Chief Justice Warren, I am used as a scapegoat. But if I am eliminated, there won't be any way of knowing. Maybe something can be saved, something can be done; what have you got to answer to that, Chief Justice Warren ?

(*pause*) Right now, I am the only one who can bring out the truth to our President . . . Does that make sense to you ? (*pause*) Now maybe certain people don't want to know the truth that may come out of me.

Ford Is there anything more you can tell us if, er, if, you went back to Washington ?

Ruby Yes. Are you sincere in wanting to take me back ?

Ford We are most interested in all the information you have. (*smiles*)

Ruby I have been used for a purpose, and there will be a certain tragic occurrence happening if you don't take my testimony and somehow vindicate me !

Warren (*gloating*) But we have your testimony. We have it **here**. (*picks up stenographer's notes*) It will be in permanent form for the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States, and for the people of the entire world. It is here. **It** will be recorded for all to see. **That** is the purpose of our coming here today. (*smiles*) We feel that you are entitled to have your story told.

Ruby I know that your hands are tied and that you are helpless.

Warren Well, Mr Ruby, is there anything more you feel you should tell us ? I think if I was in your position I would figure it out very carefully as to whether it would endanger me or not. I want you to feel that you are absolutely free to refrain from testifying any time you wish.

Ruby Gentlemen, if you want to hear any further testimony, you will have to get me to Washington, **soon**, because it has something to **do** with **you**, Chief Justice Warren . . .

Warren (*nervous*) Well, the public **attention** it would attract, and the **people** who would be **around**; we have no place **there** for you to be safe – when we take you out – , and **we** are not law enforcement officers, and it **isn't our** responsibility to go into **anything** of **that** kind.

Ruby You have lost me, though. You have lost me, Chief Justice Warren.

Warren The hearing is closed. (*exeunt Ford, Warren, Tonahill and Moore. The policemen smile broadly.*)

Decker Come on, Sparky. (*The policemen lead Ruby out.*)



November at the Carousel

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