

# WITNESS INTERVIEW

# ROBERT M. MANNLEY

DO NOT REMOVE THIS COVER SHEET -- THANK YOU

1 STATEMENT OF ROBERT M. MANLEY, TAKEN AT MR. MANLEY'S HOME,  
 2 9459 EAST LOCH LOMOND DRIVE, PICO, BY INVESTIGATOR FRANK  
 3 B. JEMISON, AT 3:30 P. M. FEBRUARY 1, 1950.

4 Bk. 106  
 Pg. 88

5 File No:  
 6 Charge:  
 7 Title:  
 8 Deputy:

30-1208

Present: Mrs. Robert M. Manley  
 Sgt. Finas Brown, LAPD.  
 James F. McGrath, D.A. Inv.

Questions by: Frank B. Jemison

Reported by: Florence Weber

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9 Q What is your full name?

10 A Robert M. Manley

11 Q Your residence address?  
 Pico.

A. [REDACTED]

12 Q The telephone?

A. [REDACTED]

13 Q What is your business address?

14 A [REDACTED] I am down here  
 all the time in this territory, but the company is there.

15 Q You don't have an address in Los Angeles?

16 A No, telephone service. [REDACTED]

17 Q Of course as you know, you have been completely eliminated  
 as a suspect in this case by the Police Department.

18 A That's what I thought, yes.

19 Q We are here to see if you can help us in any way by trying  
 to remember some of the conversations you had with Beth Short  
 at the time three years ago, when you were riding around in the  
 car with her and talking with her. The first time you met her,  
 I believe you picked her up on a street corner in San Diego.

20 A Uh-huh.

21 Q If you can, relate more of the conversations you had with  
 her. To you it may seem unimportant, but anything that she  
 might have said, particularly relative to boy friends, or  
 anybody she might have mentioned, for instance, doctors' names,  
 if she mentioned any at any time. But if you can, try to  
 relate -- when you first met her and picked her up on the  
 street corner -- relate everything she said, as near as you  
 can remember. Do you know everything she said?

22 A Well, gosh, everything like that was taken down in the  
 statement I gave to the Police Department when they called me in.

23 FEB 7 1950

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1 I told them everything I could think of. She didn't mention  
2 anybody's name she had been out with or any doctors, or she  
3 didn't mention anybody. The only thing that happened that  
4 seemed a little funny to me, on the way in to Los Angeles, she  
5 kept turning her head and looked out of the window -- looked  
6 at cars we passed or that passed us, on the highway. I thought  
7 maybe she was watching for someone that might be following her  
8 up from San Diego or something.

9 Q She made a telephone call there, in San Diego, just before  
10 she left to come to Los Angeles. Did she use a pay telephone?  
11 A No, I did.

12 Q You did?  
13 A Yes, I called my wife from San Diego.

14 Q Well, she did make some telephone calls, didn't she?  
15 Didn't you see her make several telephone calls?  
16 A No, not one.

17 Q In other words, any calls she might have made to anyone  
18 from the motel, you didn't see her make those?  
19 A No, that's right. I was out working after I left the motel  
20 and when I had made my calls I picked her up and I made a few  
21 calls in the way in, coming back to Los Angeles. As far  
22 as I knew she was just sitting there in the car waiting until  
23 I came back from my calls. She could have made calls and  
24 gotten back to the car before I came out of those offices but  
25 I don't know if she did.

26 Q It seems from investigation she did make a lot of telephone  
27 calls. I think you would remember if she made any telephone  
28 calls that you saw? Did you see her make any?  
29 A Not one, while I was with her.

30 Q Did she ever say at any time she would like to get in touch  
31 with someone and wanted to make a telephone call?  
32 A No, she never did. She told me she was going to meet her  
33 sister from Berkeley at the Biltmore Hotel.

34 Q What was the name of her sister, the name she gave you?  
35 A I've forgotten. It's been so long. I don't even know if she  
36 did mention her name. She just said her sister; that's all  
37 she did mention; that she thought she would spend some time  
38 with her sister and then go home to Boston. . . She did say  
39 that. That's the only thing.

40 Q Enroute to Los Angeles, when she was telling you she wanted  
41 to go to the Biltmore Hotel, did she ever say you could make  
42 it someplace else, or was it always the Biltmore Hotel?  
43

1 A Well, I asked her when we were coming to Los Angeles, I  
2 asked her where to take her and she said she wanted to meet  
3 her sister at the Biltmore Hotel. She got the idea of checking  
4 her baggage at the Greyhound.

5 Q What did she say about that?

6 A Well, she just said -- I don't remember exactly -- I know  
7 it was her idea to stop at the Greyhound and check her baggage.

8 Q Did she give you any reason for that? Was she going back  
9 up north?

10 A Well, it seems like she did give some reason at the time --  
11 her sister might not be there right away and she didn't want  
12 to have that baggage there, or something, at the hotel. I  
13 believe that was it, and then she was satisfied for me to just  
14 leave her right there but I didn't go for that. She led me to  
15 believe she hadn't been in Los Angeles before and I told her  
16 it was a bad part of town and I better take her to the Biltmore  
17 and I told her to stay away from that part of town.

18 Q Well, did she say her sister was staying at the Biltmore?

19 A No, she was going to meet her there.

20 Q In other words, she had plans all the time to go to the  
21 Biltmore Hotel? She told you, at least, that her sister was  
22 going to be there and meet her, is that right?

23 A That's right and she went to the rest room there to get  
24 kind of straightened up for the trip and I went down and in-  
25 quired at the desk if her sister had checked in but they  
26 didn't have anybody registered under that name.

27 Q Was the name Mrs. Adrian West?

28 A Yes, that was it -- West -- That's right.

29 Q That's what she told you? A. That's right.

30 Q During the course of your conversations with her, during  
31 that five or six hours when you were coming to Los Angeles,  
32 did she speak about how she liked to go dancing or that she  
33 liked to go dancing?

34 A Oh yes, she liked to dance, alright. Things we talked  
35 about were so unimportant, I don't even remember them. She  
36 didn't talk much on the way in. I don't know if she was  
37 worried about something or what.

38 Q Did she say she felt bad?

39 A She didn't feel good. She told me so that night at the motel.

40 Q Do you think she didn't feel well all the way up here?

41 A I don't think she did feel well. That's my impression,  
42 after what she told me.

1 Q Did she mention ever doing any contest ballroom dancing --  
anything like that? A. No.

2 Q Did she ever mention any dancing partners? A. No.

3 Q Anybody she liked to dance with? A. No.

4 Q And she led you to believe she had never been in Los  
5 Angeles before, is that right?

A That's right.

6 Q The next morning there after the one -- before you started  
7 for Los Angeles, on the morning of the 9th of January, 1947,  
8 did she mention that she had been taking some shots, or  
any kind of medicine for her health?

A No, she didn't say a thing about that.

9 Q Just what did she say about her condition -- how she felt?

10 A Well, she didn't even care to have me do much talking  
11 after we got back to the room, after we had been dancing.  
12 She just took a blanket off of the bed, propped her legs up  
13 against the wall by the heater and I asked her what was the  
14 matter with her and she said she just didn't feel well and for  
15 me to leave her alone so I did, and she didn't talk much more  
after that.

14 Q Did you see her writing any letters that night?

A No, she didn't write any as far as I know.

15 Q What did she say about her health? Did she say she had a  
16 headache? or a tooth ache?

A She said it was just that time of the month and she wanted  
17 to be left alone.

18 Q She didn't say if she had a tooth ache or a head ache?

A No, she just led me to believe she was having a menstruation  
19 period -- that was all.

20 Q What would you say most of the conversation was about?  
About dancing -- going places?

A Well, she liked to have a good time, I guess.

22 Q Well, as near as you can remember -- of course it's  
23 difficult, I know -- but as near as you can remember, what were  
24 some of the things she said, regardless of what it was -- just  
25 what she said? Did she mention her mother?

A No, it's so hard to remember after all this time, the things  
26 she said. Gosh, what we talked about were just minor things  
a person wouldn't think about, just carrying conversation  
along.

1 Q Did she tell you she came from Massachusetts?

2 A Yes, from Boston.

3 Q Did she mention her mother at all?

A. No.

4 Q Her family?

5 A Well, she mentioned going back home to Boston after a visit with her sister.

6 Q Did she tell you she came from a very fine family or anything like that?

7 A No, she didn't mention anything about that.

8 Q What did she say about her sister, outside of the fact she wanted to meet her at the Biltmore?

9 A That was all she said about her sister.

10 Q You are positive, are you, that she didn't make any telephone calls on the 9th of January?

11 A I didn't see her make any, as far as I know, yes.

12 I wish I could help you more. I want to get this squared off. It looks like a new Grand Jury.

13 Q Well, of course, your name probably won't come up at any time.

14 A Of course, I realize they haven't found anything to go on.

15 Q That's why we are here today, in the hope that maybe you could remember something that to you would be insignificant and of no value, but to us it might mean something.

16 A Have you my statement that I made before?

17 Q Yes. In there we found very little as to actual conversation.

18 A Well, it must have been the usual thing -- unimportant things that would just go in one ear and out of the other. Things I wouldn't remember. She had that little notebook -- no, address book.

19 Q Did she tell you how she got down to San Diego?

20 A No. I don't remember her saying how she got down there.

21 Q What did she tell you about her profession? What did she do for a living?

22 A Well, she did say something about that. Said she worked -- lets see -- in the airport or some transport lines, or something, in the office.

23 Q On one occasion she asked you to meet her at that place, didn't she, and she didn't show up, in San Diego, where she was supposed to be working?

24 A Yes, it seems like it to me.

1 Q What did she say when you finally met her after she failed  
2 to keep the appointment? What did she say about it? Why wasn't  
3 she there?

A I don't remember.

4 Q Did this girl in San Diego where she stayed have a brother?  
OFFICER BROWN: Yes, a kid about 16 years old -- Gary.

5 Q Gary French?

6 A OFFICER BROWN: Uh-huh.

7 MR. MANLEY: It seems she went into town with him or something,  
8 or with the sister.

9 Q Did she continue to lead you to believe she was working at  
10 the transportation company?

11 A Yes, as far as I knew. I figured when she didn't keep the  
12 appointment that she was working and I asked two or three  
13 people and they didn't know her and I didn't think she  
14 worked there then.

15 Q What we want to know is anything she told you lies?  
16 What did she say about this job when she left San Diego? Did  
17 she mention she quit the job?

18 A I believe she did. I wouldn't swear to it, no, but I  
19 believe she did say she quit the job and wanted to know if I  
20 would take her to Los Angeles to visit her sister.

21 Q Did she talk something about -- well, having a party -- I  
22 mean, about the sex idea?

23 A No, she was very cold.

24 Q She didn't even talk about it?

25 A No, she didn't even talk about it. She was very cold, as  
26 far as I was concerned.

27 Q Did she talk about any murders you had been reading about  
28 in newspapers -- anything about that?

29 A No, in fact, she talked very little on the way in to Los  
30 Angeles and I wasn't in a very talkative mood. I don't know  
31 what was the matter with her. It didn't make any difference  
32 to me. I was just glad to get rid of her.

33 Q I wish you could remember some of the things she did. It  
34 might help to bring these conversations back to you. Enroute,  
35 did she want to stop at any service station and go to the rest  
36 room at any time during that time?

37 A Well, I stopped for gas at Laguna Beach, I believe, and she  
38 went to the rest room.

39 Q You are quite sure she didn't use the telephone there?

1 A I didn't see her use one, No.

2 Q Did she talk about being hungry coming up?

3 A Yes, we stopped and had something to eat there. I had made  
4 a call there at Escondido, I believe, and I believe we stopped  
5 there and had a hamburger at a little restaurant there. I  
6 believe the next stop was Laguna Beach.

7 Q In your conversation, did you talk about different places  
8 to eat. Did she tell you what kind of food she preferred?

9 A No, I don't remember talking anything about that. She  
10 liked hamburgers.

11 Q MR. MC GRATH: There is one thing I am curious about:  
12 When these automobiles you said she was apparently looking  
13 for, I mean, noticing, was that both behind your car and  
14 coming from the opposite direction? G

15 A Cars that passed on the right, and then, if I'm not  
16 mistaken, cars that would pass us, but I noticed mainly on  
17 cars I would pass. She would strain her neck and look, like  
18 this (turning head, looking back) toward the rear of the car.

19 Q For the record then, after you would pass automobiles  
20 proceeding in the same direction as yours, she would turn her  
21 head to the rear to see the occupants of the car?

22 A Yes, and take a good look at the occupants.

23 Q When did she first start that?

24 A Gosh, that's hard to say. I noticed a few times that  
25 happened and I made some remark about it.

26 Q What was her answer to that remark? Now, really think deep  
27 on that if you will please. When you made the remark about  
28 looking, did she say anything about she was expecting any  
29 friends to come to Los Angeles or that there were other people  
30 coming she knew, to Los Angeles, or anything like that?

31 A No, I just was curious about it, you know, and it seems  
32 like I made some remark, something about my company, I imagine.

33 Q What you really said, was, "Don't you like my company?" Is  
34 that it?

35 A Well, I made some remark, I know. She just passed it off  
36 and said, "It isn't that" but she didn't give any reason or  
37 anything, I'm sure, but I was curious, you see. That's how I  
38 happened to remember it.

39 Q MR. MC GRATH: Did you think she was afraid of someone?

40 A I didn't know what to think.

41 Q Did this first -- peering backwards -- now, I am a little  
42 hazy on this. Was this when you first left San Diego, before  
43 you stopped for the night -- her looking back at those cars?



1 A That was on the way in to Los Angeles. After she wanted to  
 2 come to Los Angeles, when I picked her up that night from out  
 3 at Frenchs. She wanted to know if I could take her to Los  
 4 Angeles and I said I couldn't take her that night, I had to work,  
 5 that day, but I could take her in the morning and she said  
 6 couldn't I take her to the bus stop or car line or something  
 7 and I said sure, I can do that. So when we got through  
 8 dancing she was hungry and wanted to pick up some hamburgers  
 9 and go to the motel, so the next morning I told her I had to go  
 10 out and make calls but I would be back about noon, so I left  
 11 her there -- I think I gave her a dollar to go and get some  
 12 breakfast -- I'm not real sure about that -- and I told her  
 13 I would be back at noon, so I came back about 1:00 or 1:30, I  
 14 imagine. I remember it was a little late -- I remember that,  
 15 because I told the lady in the motel it was a little late but I  
 16 wanted to check out, so we started for Los Angeles, and that's  
 17 when she began looking back at cars.

18 Q In other words, to the best of your memory, previous to  
 19 that time, she didn't seem bothered about automobiles, but after  
 20 leaving the motel was when she began looking at cars?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Where did you dance that night?

23 A Oh, that place over in Mission Valley -- Hacienda.

24 Q Now, you say you left the next morning, after 1:00 or  
 25 possibly 1:30. Now, what time do you figure you made OceanSide?

26 A Well, I couldn't be sure. We just drove right along. I  
 27 stopped at Encinitas. I was there quite awhile because there  
 28 was a new account that I had never called on before and I  
 29 talked to the superintendent and lined up some fittings he  
 30 needed but we had to wait for the manager to come back to write  
 31 up the order and I was there quite awhile and she waited outside  
 32 in the car and I never paid much attention to what she did, if  
 33 she got out of the car or anything, and then we stopped and ate  
 34 in Encinitas before we started off for OceanSide and we stopped  
 35 for gas. It was getting late in the afternoon and we stopped  
 36 at Laguna Beach, I imagine, around 5:00 or 5:30, I don't know  
 37 exactly.

38 Q What time did you let her out at the Biltmore?

39 A I'm pretty sure it was around 7:00 or 7:30. I was getting  
 40 anxious to get out of there. I looked around, went to the desk  
 41 and her sister hadn't come, and I had to get home.

42 Q Now, getting back to Encinitas. How long would you say  
 43 you were there? B. the way, did you call on any others?

44 A I don't remember if I did or not.

45 Q What kind of company was it?

46 A It was a water company in Encinitas.

1 Q Do you remember the address or what street that was on?

2 A The street runs parallel to the highway and its just a couple blocks south of the highway there.

3 Q And you were in there about how long?

4 A I must have been there an hour or an hour and a half.

5 Q And she was supposedly in the car at that time?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Would it have been possible for her to leave the automobile without you seeing her leave it?

8 A Yes, I think so. The first street is parallel to the highway and there was a Shell station, I believe, right on the corner there -- that's the little street that runs into the highway, and I had pulled up from the highway and parked right by the gas station, and then there's a little alley right there and I could see the superintendent's trucks. That's why I stopped. I went over and talked to the superintendent -- I think she did make some remark about a couple fellows on bicycles or something talking to her while I was inside -- just talked to her while she was sitting in the car. She did say something about that.

9 Q When you left there, was she still looking for automobiles behind her?

10 A Gosh, I couldn't say for sure. She might have been doing that all the time and I just noticed it at Oceanside. I couldn't say. Things like that seems so unimportant at the time, you know, but it was just something that stuck in my mind.

11 Q Now, getting back to that dance. Did she dance with any other fellows there?

12 A I don't believe she did, unless -- she did dance once with this vocalist.

13 Q With the band?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Where were you, as near as you can remember, when she first told you she wanted to go to the Biltmore Hotel to meet her sister?

16 A I think she told me that night -- before we left.

17 Q At the Meeza Motel?

18 A No, I don't think it was there. I think it was after we left Franchise that night. I asked her if she wanted to go to Los Angeles or something and as near as I can remember, she told me she wanted to meet her sister at the Biltmore.

19 Q Had she mentioned she had been to Los Angeles at all previously? Did she mention any other places in Los Angeles?

20 A She said that was her first trip to Los Angeles.

1 Q She did definitely say that? A Yes.

2 Q Coming back to the time she was sitting in the car waiting  
3 for you in Encinitas. The only thing she said was that there  
4 was a couple -- did she say young fellows?

5 A Yes, young fellows.

6 Q -- that talked to her while you were there doing your  
7 business?

8 A Yes, and I'm pretty sure she said on bicycles.

9 Q Did she try to borrow money off of you during that trip?

10 A No, she never asked me for any money.

11 Q Did she mention at any time how much money she had?

12 A No.

13 Q Did you ever see how much money she had?

14 A No, I never did.

15 Q While she opened her purse -- if you could see if you  
16 looked in her purse? Did she open her purse?

17 A She might have opened it to powder her nose, or something?

18 A No, I didn't notice that.

19 Q Just go ahead and tell us anything you can think of at all  
20 that was part of any conversations?

21 A Gosh, I wish I could.

22 Q She didn't at any time mention names? If I read names,  
23 you wouldn't know them at all?

24 A Well, you might read them, as far as I know, she didn't  
25 mention anybody.

26 Q If the names are not familiar and you never heard them,  
27 say so.

28 A Yes.

29 Q Dr. Arthur Faught?

30 A Now, wait a minute. She mentioned this guy she had been  
31 married to.

32 Q Gordon Fackling?

33 A Yes, she mentioned him and as far as I know, she showed me  
34 a picture of him.

35 Q You now have had your memory refreshed and it wasn't Fackling?  
36 but what was the name?

37 A Gosh, I don't remember. It has been so long. The fellow  
38 she was married to.

39

1 Q She showed you a clipping from the newspaper?

A Yes, but I don't remember now what his name was.

2 Q SGT. BROWN: She took a piece of paper out of her purse --  
3 newspaper clipping, and showed it to you?

A Yes.

4 Q And on that piece of paper was an account of a wedding in  
5 1948? A. It seems to me it was, yes.

6 Q And the name on the paper at the time was Matt Gordon?

A Yes.

7 Q MR. MC GRATH: Dr. Morris?

A No.

8 Q De Gaston? A. No.

9 Doctor Ahrens? A. No.

10 Q Dr. Scott? A. No.

11 Q Dr. Brooks A. No.

12 Q Dr. Mitchell A. No.

13 Q Dr. Brix? A. No.

14 Q Glenn Wolf? A. No.

15 Q Mark Hanson? A. No.

16 Q Carl Halseiga? A. No.

17 Q Dr. Hart? A. No.

18 Q Otto Premere? A. No.

19 Q Harry Long? A. No.

20 Q Did she mention any girl friends at all -- Trudy?

21 A No. This Fackling -- I don't know if it's someone I  
22 know, but Fackling sounds familiar. I don't know if she  
23 mentioned something about him or not. Where does he come  
24 into the picture.

25 SGT. BROWN: He was her boy friend at that time.

A That's right. Was he killed?

26 Q SGT. BROWN: No, Gordon was the one that was killed. Fackling  
27 was the one I think she talked about writing a letter to back  
28 east/

- 1 A It seems like she mentioned fackling.
- 2 Q Did you mention to her at all when she kept complaining about  
how lousy she felt, about going to see a doctor?
- 3 A No.
- 4 Q She didn't mention she was contemplating visiting a doctor,  
did she? A. No.
- 5 Q Did she tell you anything about suffering from asthma?
- 6 A No.
- 7 Q What did she say definitely, what was wrong with her?
- 8 A Well, she didn't say. She just led me to believe --
- 9 Q That it was that time of the month?
- 10 A Yeah, and she wanted to be left alone.
- 11 Q Now, she wasn't interested in the cars approaching you on  
the highway, is that right?
- 12 A I don't believe so, no.
- 13 Q But those you would pass, she would peer into them?
- 14 A Yes, especially on that side, if I would pass someone.
- 15 Q Did she turn around and look back when you were proceeding  
on the highway?
- 16 A Well, she turned her neck quite a bit and looked out, but  
I don't think she got up on the road and stared out of the  
17 window, or anything like that.
- 18 Q And you first commented about that in Oceanside?
- 19 A That's where it seems to me I mentioned something about it.
- 20 Q And you had stopped before Oceanside -- how many stops  
had you made before Oceanside?
- 21 A I'm not sure. I don't remember, except Encinitas and  
22 Laguna Beach for gas. Outside of those two, I don't remember  
any others. I might have stopped to call on someone else, but  
23 I would have to look up my records.
- 24 Q Can you place the name of a town or resort approximately 25  
30 miles towards Los Angeles from San Diego? I mean, can  
25 you place a town in that location?
- 26 A On the highway?
- 27 Q Yes. I have a reason for asking that. As you look back,  
possibly, the first town out of San Diego. What would be the  
28 first town out of San Diego, coming towards Los Angeles?
- 29 A It seems to me it was -- well, she stopped with these Frenchs  
in Pacific Beach, I believe. That was the closest.

1 Q The next one?

A Encinitas, on the highway, I think.

2 Q Well, did she mention to you that she had been in Encinitas  
3 before? Did she mention, "I was here once before" or anything  
4 like that?

5 A No, she was just staying with that girl there in that  
6 housing project. She didn't say anything about being there  
7 before.

8 Q At no time did she mention in any of those towns coming up  
9 that she had been there before and had a good time, or something  
10 like that?

11 A She mentioned she had not; that it was new to her -- new  
12 sights, etc. She did mention something about that, I  
13 remember.

14 Q MR. MC GRATH: You don't remember at all her answer to you  
15 about your comment about those cars?

16 A She just passed it off.

17 MR. JEMISON: Of course, what we came back here for today was  
18 in the hope of picking up any unimportant conversations that  
19 you remembered and that you didn't remember when your statement  
20 was taken before. It might seem unimportant to you, but at  
21 this point it might help us.  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26