

STATEMENT OF:

William M. Johns
No date
by Williams

WILLIAM M. JOHNS.

EXAMINATION BY MR. WILLIAMS:

Q What is your name?

A William M. Johns.

Q You went down on the train?

A Yes, sir.

Q What is your address?

A 118 Northwest 4th Street, Homestead; telephone, 563-J; or my office phone is 513-J.

Q And you are connected with what paper?

A The Miami Daily News.

Q The Miami Daily News?

A Yes, sir. I called Mr. Sheldon at about 9:30 Monday morning. That whole territory down there is considered my beat, south of Miami through the camps, and of course I was interested in knowing whether or not the camps were going to be evacuated if the storm came. At no time did I think that that storm would hit, before late Monday night or Tuesday, according to the weather bulletins that I was getting, and I was keeping right up with those weather bulletins over the air, and from the bureau, from Carson here in Miami, all the time, because I was phoning him, down there at my office.

Q You mean you were keeping in touch with Carson?

A Yes, sir.

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Called
Sheldon
9:30 AM
Monday

Also
keeping
to Carson

Q Were you getting the weather bulletins out of Key West?

A No. No, I didn't get anything out of Key West.

Q Where did you get them? Jacksonville?

A From the weather bureau here in Miami, and from the information put out over the air.

Q Where was that information put out from?

A From both "W Q A M" and "W I O D".

Q Here?

A Here; and Carson here in Miami.

Q He did that broadcasting, did he? Carson broadcasted?

A Yes; he broadcasted, or the papers would call him and they would broadcast it themselves off and on quite often.

Q Were the formal advisories broadcasted over the radio?

A Yes.

Q These two radio stations are owned by the newspapers?

A No; "W I O D" is owned by the Miami Daily News, or is affiliated, I should say; "W Q A M" is independent. So I kept those advisories up, and in fact, from Sunday night on; at one time I called Carson and asked him to please, when he was giving those things 200 miles east of Havana, and so on and so forth, and at first it was "northeast storm warnings for the Florida coast" - -

Q When was that?

A That was, to my best recollection, from Sunday night on. And I called once and asked him to please include the forecast for the Redland district down there; that is this district south of

*Radio
Station
running
weather
bulletins*

Miami, between Miami and the keys.

Q For what district?

A We call it the "Redland" district.

Q Redland district?

A Yes; so the fruit growers would know what was coming. I was having all kinds of calls, and people in Homestead wanted to know what it was going to do, and so on and so forth. So to get back to this particular story, I called Sheldon and he told me that he had two trains waiting in Miami.

*Sheldon
says
2 trains
waiting*

Q When did you call him?

A About 9:30 or 10:00 o'clock.

Q Monday morning?

A Monday morning.

Q And he told you he had two trains?

A He told me he had two trains in Miami, waiting to come down and evacuate those camps if necessary. I said, "Well, how is your weather?" He said, "It's raining and blowing like Hell down here right now", and I said "What's your barometer reading?". Now, here's one thing I tried before I came up here to do; locate the note that I wrote at the time I was talking to him; but it was either 29.87 or 28.87, that he told me.

*Raining
like
hell*

Q The barometer reading?

A Yes, sir.

Q Is that a dangerous reading?

A Yes; that is an indication of a storm. The normal around here is, I believe, around 31.00, or right around there;

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30 -- it is right around there.

Hostile?

Q Well, 29.80 wouldn't look to me like so damn dangerous.

A The minute that the barometer drops more than say 5 or 6 points here, especially during September, it is an indication of a storm, and an indication that that is going to be a low area.

Q What was your occasion of calling Sheldon at that time?

A When?

Q At 9:00 o'clock Monday morning.

A Simply in the capacity of a newspaper man, I wanted to know whether or not he was going to evacuate those camps in case the storm hit.

Q Did you see any necessity of evacuating those troupes on Monday?

A Yes, sir, I did. From indications, and from weather maps, and from the information put out by the Weather Bureau, that that storm was 200 miles east of Havana, and discounting that to some extent, because the weather bureau never does -- I have found I have been here through all the storms since '26; they never knew exactly where these storms are, and that was coming up through those straits, and knowing that country down there, I knew they were going to get an awful blow.

Ref. to Fla. Straits

Q When did you think that would come?

A I didn't expect it before very late Monday night or early Tuesday morning, from the information as put out.

Q Now, when you speak of the Florida straits, do you

mean the sea between Key West and Havana?

A Yes, sir.

Q You don't mean a strip of land east of the Gulf Stream on this coast?

A No, sir.

Q When everybody speaks of the straits, they mean that passage between Havana and Key West?

A Yes, sir; But I knew if Key West would get it, that a storm of any intensity and width at all would go over those keys down there, because those keys have always more or less attracted those storms that come through near Key West.

Q Is it a fact that you have had less damage down there on the Keys and Key West, than you have had in Miami?

A For the last few years, yes. They had a very disastrous one down there in 1906, or '09, one of the two, when they were putting that Florida East Coast Railway through, but since that time there has never been a whole lot of attention paid to it. They have had storms down there, and those hurricanes, when they come in through there, have often gone through the Florida Keys, but until this Army camp was down there, there were never enough people on those Keys to really make big news, or anything like that, and a lot of it has never had any attention paid to it. That is one reason you have never heard so much about it. But, to get back to the story; after I called Sheldon, I called the Daily News, and gave them that information, and that was printed in the Noon Edition, Monday, of the Miami Daily News.

Q You mean, that he had the two trains waiting?

A That he had the two trains waiting.

Q He said "two trains"?

A "Two trains"; yes, sir; and that in case --

Q Did he say in Miami?

A In Miami. His exact words were -- when I got him I said "What are you going to do about this evacuation in case that storm hits?" and he said "I have two trains waiting in Miami that can get down here on about three or four hours notice, and in case it gets too bad why we will send for them", and then I asked him about the weather, and so on and so forth. So I called the News, and told them what was happening, and they said, "Well, watch it", and I said "If that train goes down, I'm going down on it", so they said "O.K.".

Q The reason I asked you about two trains in Miami, the fact is that Sheldon had arranged for one train here, and another train was in Key West. Could he have been thinking about those two, or did he say two in Miami?

A He told me two in Miami.

Q Did you say just now that if that train goes down you are going down on it?

A Yes, sir.

Q Which train?

A The train from Miami.

Q Well, there were two here?

A Well, of course, I meant the first train to go through.

So I kept in touch, and in fact the station agent at Homestead knew nothing about that until I called him and told him, and I asked him if the train left Miami if he would have the information, and he said yes, and I said "Well, then, please call me, because I want to get on it here at Homestead", and I said "I want to go down there and cover the evacuation of these camps", and he said "O.K."; so it went on and we weren't doing so very much boarding up there at Homestead, because all this time --

Q You live in Homestead?

A I live in Homestead. Because all this time the weather bureau continued to say "200 miles east of Havana". About 1:30, I am pretty sure we got a new storm warning that read "Gale warnings from Key Largo to Key West, and Hurricane warnings posted in Key West". Well, then I knew that it wouldn't be long until that train would be going through.

Q Was that a formal advisory?

A That was a formal advisory, yes, sir. I have copies of it down there now, because I kept it; I copied it off stenographically; I didn't, my wife did; she is a stenographer. So the wind began increasing there at Homestead, and it was possibly blowing -- it was raining, and blowing about 30 to 40 miles an hour that afternoon.

Q Monday afternoon?

A Monday afternoon; and at approximately 4:10 -- no, it wasn't that late -- it must have been about ten minutes to four, the Station Agent called me and said the train was leaving Miami, and that I better get over there. He said it would be in Homestead

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3:50 PM
get call

in about an hour. So I got over there to the station, and I think the train is supposed to have left here some time around 4:25; because I called the News, and there were several conversations in attempts to get a photographer on that train up here, and at the time I called them, the train was ready to leave. They said the dispatcher up here told the Daily News here in Miami that the train would not stop in Homestead, so they called me and said I better take my car. You see from all this -- the reason I am telling you all this --

Q Did you mean go down to the scene in your car?

Q Yes; go down to the scene in my car. That shows that we had no idea of this storm coming so quick. So I told him I knew that train was going to stop in Homestead, because, I said, "There is an A. T. & T. -- that is, American Telephone & Telegraph man here to get on; they have a hand car to put on, and the engine is going to stop and make a turn in the 'Y' here and pull the train down tender first, which it did. And I said "There is one of the railroad officials that are going to get on here at Homestead". He said, "No; the dispatcher tells me it is not going to stop there; you better get in your car". I said, "No, Frank" -- it was Frank Malone I was talking to -- "I said No, Frank, that train is bound to stop here". To cut this down and make it shorter, the train got into Homestead at about five o'clock, and we left there at 5:10 or 5:08, after putting that hand car on. There were eight Veterans --

Q Putting a hand car on?

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*Train to
pick up
hand car
in Homestead*

*Talking
to
Frank Malone*

*8 vets
got on*

A Yes; one of these little chuggers that belong to the American Telephone & Telegraph Company. There were six veterans there that had just come up in a car, in a Ford sedan, and stopped there, out of gas, and at that time they told me it was blowing very hard, and they had a hard time getting out.; that the water was breaking over those bridges down there. And they wanted to get on the train and go back and get their clothes, which they did. They were on the train. And we started out of Homestead. Now, there is a stretch of water between Homestead and Key Largo which usually goes out in a hurricane, or high wind, and as we came down there the waves through that -- there is just a little stretch slightly wider than the track through there, and those waves were coming up I would say from -- well, about three or four feet then. That is up here this side of Key Largo. I don't know the name of that cut there.

Q You mean that is dry in there -- usually dry?

A Yes; usually dry.

Q But the water comes in?

A Yes; and it was entirely covered, and there were two or three feet waves there at that time. It began to get dark, and rain harder, and blow harder, the further south we went. We went through Key Largo, and it was still light, and when we got to Plantation, it was dark, and we couldn't see the Plantation Station, and incidentally, I talked to a man later at the station, and he said within three minutes after we left the station, the station went down and fell right over on the track right there at Plantation.

Water
breaking
over
bridges

Waves
breaking
over
tracks
north of
Key Largo

Plantation
Key Station
destroyed
minutes
after
train passed

So we kept on going, and when we got across Snake Creek -- of course it was dark by now, and the wind by that time -- we didn't realize it inside those cars, but according to the statements of the persons on the outside, it was probably blowing 100 miles an hour right then, and the rain was blowing very hard, and we got through Camp No. 1 to that rock quarry -- it is a key-stone rock quarry, where the train stopped with a sudden stop. I looked out of a window, and saw a big wire right down beside -- that was the last passenger coach; I thought it was a live wire, and I thought of the car being electrified, and I was getting out of that car pretty quick. So I went on up to the next car, and then shortly the flagman or brakeman told me that it was the cable of that derrick that had blown down and slipped over the top of the cars that caught onto the back box car -- the last box car, and it was stretched enough so that the end of it was right up with the passenger car, which would have made it two box cars, because it was on the front end of the last one -- two box cars, and two passenger cars back from us. I understood -- I didn't have a watch with me, but I understood we lost about an hour and fifteen or twenty minutes there in getting that wire loose from that car, and the crew and the A. T. & T. man and part of the Veterans went out there and got it off, while another bunch of us got a little family -- part of the Russell family down there, that were huddled in a little house at the rock quarry less than fifty feet from the track, into the train. A man and his wife, his son and his wife and two small boys, one about three, and the other about five, and

*Train
I looked to
stop*

*Russell
family
house
at quarry*

a six or seven months old baby; and we got them all out and into the train, and from then on down to Islamorada we were trying to get them warm; they were wet, water soaked, and so on and so forth; and we were trying to get them warm, and I didn't pay a lot of attention as we went, but at no time did we believe that the actual hurricane had struck yet. It seemed as though we were in a bad storm, but there was no fear, or no idea that it was the hurricane that was there. We knew it was blowing awful hard, because when we tried to get them in, three or four of us had to lay on the ground to pull them along on the ground.

Had to
pull along
on ground

MR. WILLIAMS: Pull who along?

A This family we rescued there at Camp No. 1. At that time six or eight veterans who had taken refuge over there in that rock quarry got on the train. They were the only ones in camp No. 1 that got on. There was some talk there about getting the Camp 1 men onto that train, but they said the wind was blowing too hard, and the men wouldn't come across the tracks. It was possibly 100 yards or 200 yards from the tracks where we were to the camp. And we thought we would go on down and get No. 3 out first, and not waste the time at No. 1, and get on to No. 3 and get back. Well, we got on down to Islamorada, and the train stopped at the station, and asked for some information, and he come back and started out, and the train again suddenly come to a stop, which was when the last box car went off the tracks, and threw on the brakes, and they thought somebody had pulled the air brakes, and they went back through the train, and of course it

A 280

was so dark, and the water was rising by that time.

Q Over the tracks?

A Yes, sir. And as best that we could see, we thought the train was moving. In fact, we thought the train was moving for quite a while after it was standing still there. It must have been fifteen or twenty minutes from the time that we stopped the last time, after the engineer saw that he couldn't get any farther, and he pulled his train out as far from that station as he could, it must have been fifteen or twenty minutes until the big wave -- the tidal wave -- hit the train, lifted it off of the tracks, and scattered it kind of fan-shaped; the last cars practically stood on the tracks, and as they would go on down towards the engine, they would get farther out; the first car, I would judge, was 100 yards out.

Q I saw that. Which car were you in?

A At that time I was in the last passenger car.

Q How did you get out of that thing, Boy? Because that wave -- did it subside immediately and drop the cars?

A It seemed to; the car went over so easy that we thought that something was just lifting up and possibly something had blown under it; we didn't know exactly what it was.

Q Did water come in the car?

A Oh, yes. By that time practically every window in the car was out. During all this time we had gone back and pulled down the shades to keep the glass from blowing through, and all that kind of stuff, but the windows were popping one right after

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Tst.
train
moving

Car went
over easy

Windows
popping
out

the other, and the water was blowing right clear through the car.

I had been up --- you see, this family was up in the second car.

I had been there with them, and for some reason I had got up and walked back to this other car, and there were six veterans in

that. I just walked into that smoking car -- that is, where we were in the smoking car -- in the smoking compartment. I sat down on the seat, and (indicating), this is your door here. I sat

down on the side of the arm rest, and was sitting there when the car went up, so I grabbed onto the door, and held on. I said, "Well, she's gone, boys", and the rest of them were saying "yes, we're gone", and this, that and the other thing; but it stopped, you know, at about an angle tilt -- in other words, it went over against that overturned box car of cement, and stopped it, and so we got ourselves up and for about two minutes there, there was kind of a panic. I said "Let's get out of this car", and I ran down to the other end of it.

Q How did you run? You couldn't run on the floor, could you?

A Yes; it was tilted like that (indicating, holding hands in a "V" shape, with the point down); you know, you can do anything when you are scared. Somehow we got down there, and I could see through the door that the next car was tilted further than ours, and the water was just streaming through between the two cars, and I saw it wouldn't do any good to open the door, because of that water; all that water would rush in on us.

Q Why didn't it run through the windows?

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Went
into
Smoking
Car

A It was going so fast that the water was coming through -- the spray was coming through -- water did come through, it's true; for a while there was just one wave after another.

Q So you were wet to above the knees?

A Yes, we were wet all over. So we ran down there, and I turned them around, and I said "Boys, go back to that smoking compartment", and I was the last one to get back into it, because I had been the first one down, and we stayed there; but just a little bit before this we had noticed this foamy water seeping in under the windows and cracks. I don't know how it got in there; I guess through the cracks of the cars. I had noticed that. So then we just got back into that smoking car when these big waves started coming in on us, one right after the other, and it was sea water. It wasn't rain. The rain was blowing straight through. It was blowing through so hard that you couldn't see that far from you (illustrating, holding hand near his face); you couldn't see six inches to either side. It was blowing straight through the car. Some of them went down into the car, and sat in the seats turned up this way, and others stood on the other side of the door, and I stood towards the car seats side of that little door in that passageway there, and I took that position, because after I got myself quieted down I began to think if there is any way in the world I can get out of here, I want to get out, and I figured by that time the water coming in, it was banking against that low side and filling up; and it got clear up so the water was pretty near to the top of the car on the low side, and out-

Foamy
Water
seeping
in

Close

side that door -- I was standing pretty near knee-deep.

Q Did you get outside of the door?

A Outside of the smoking compartment door? Yes.

Q I see what you mean.

A You know, along there in that little isle.

Q Yes; I know what you mean.

A I stood right there during the rest of it with my back to the steel wall, and held on there while those waves broke in, and the water seemed to break to both sides of me, and stood there possibly two hours; the thing that scared us was we didn't know where we were, and we thought the whole side would slip off into the water, and the bottom fill up and be caught in there like rats in a trap; and it wasn't until a flash of lightning about possibly 3:30 or 4:00 o'clock the next morning before we knew we were on land of any kind. So that is the way we stayed.

Q What happened to that family in the other car?

A They got out O.K. The car went over. The water come up, as I understand, around the men's necks, and they took turns holding those babies up over their heads, and stood in that water that night.

Q Well, the next morning when light came, had the water subsided?

A Yes, sir; I think that water subsided much sooner than that. That wave simply passed over, and the wind was so strong it took the water all off.

Q Somebody told me today that the tidal wave came

Didn't know where they were

over and then came back.

A I don't remember of it coming back. I don't think it did; not after 8:30.

Q Well, you were at Islamorada. I was down at Camp

No. 3.

A It might have down there; I couldn't say about that.

Q Was Camp 3 the lowest camp?

A Yes, sir.

Q Well, that is where I was.

A Camp 5 is just south of the Matecumbe Hotel, and Camp 1 at Snake Creek. So we stayed there until the next morning; and all day Tuesday until four o'clock that afternoon, there was at least a 60 mile wind. I tried to get out, but I couldn't stand up against it. That morning there was a lull, and no rain, for about ten or fifteen minutes right after dawn. The miraculous thing was that the lights in our car never went out during the whole thing. The electric lights in our car stayed on. Some of the cars went out, and some stayed on. Each car had its own battery, and our battery burned itself out about four o'clock in the morning, and we had possibly two hours of total darkness; and it began to get dimmer, but it didn't burn out until 4:00 o'clock in the morning. We had lights the whole time. Then we went back into the first baggage car, and that's where we stayed all day Tuesday.

Q Was it sitting on its wheels?

A The wheels were on it, but it was further on its side

than we were, but it was kind of against the bank, and it was banked against that, and it was sitting up approximately at a 45-degree angle, because to walk, you walked right in the corner, and like this was the bottom, and this the side, just like that, (illustrating with hands). We stayed there Tuesday night. I got out Wednesday, after going down to this Matecumbe Hotel late Tuesday afternoon; I tried to get out.

Q Do you think from the information available these men could have been evacuated off of these keys?

A Yes, sir! Absolutely! From what I have heard --

Q I thought you said you didn't imagine this blow was coming till Tuesday?

A I didn't! But why leave those men down there?

Here's the question I can't solve, for myself. Those poor devils -- of course, it was right after pay day, and a lot of them were drunk; a lot of them they would have had to carry to the train; and a lot wouldn't have got on, of course, and that's all true; but the thing I can't figure out for the life of me is that when they first began to get those storm warnings, and they had any idea it would come there at all, with that number of men, and the temperament of those men, and there are men, cases of "psycho" as they call it, and knowing the wild way that those men would run around, why, early Monday morning they weren't taken out and brought either to Homestead or Miami until the storm period had passed -- of course, I have heard rumors, and rumors aren't any good, but I have heard rumors there was a squabble between the

Florida East Coast Railroad and the Administration in Washington as to who was going to pay for it; and I know it is a lot of bunk, so there is no use taking up your time with it. However this, Sheldon told me later Wednesday morning when I saw him down there at the Matecumbe Hotel, he told me that he had been in touch with Washington trying to get permission from Washington to move those Veterans, and he was instructed to stay there to await further developments.

Q Sheldon told you that?

A Yes, sir; Sheldon told me that. Now, the man had gone through an awful lot; maybe he was excited, and maybe it isn't the truth.

Q Has that appeared in the papers?

A No, sir!

Q Certainly Sheldon wouldn't say that; there was no occasion for him to communicate with Washington about moving the veterans. He didn't have to get that authority from Washington, to move the veterans off the Keys.

A I'll tell you the reason I never wrote that in my story. I believed at the time when Sheldon told me that, that he was possibly mistaken.

Q I don't see how a man could be mistaken about a thing of that kind.

A Well, just from his attitude, he was worried, and scared, and trying to do the best he could down there; but he actually did say to me -- I was walking down the road with him there,

it must have been about 8:30 or 9:00 o'clock that morning.

Q Tuesday morning?

A Wednesday morning, after the thing had subsided, and the rain had stopped, and we were figuring on getting out of there then, and I asked him, I said, "Mr. Sheldon, what about this now", I said, "Why in the devil weren't they taken out?" and he said, "I don't know; I was in touch with Washington", and he said, "I couldn't get the permission to take them off". Now, maybe he meant somewhere else.

*"I don't
get
permission"*

Q I thought you said he said -- that he told you they said to stay there; Washington told him that.

A Yes, sir; to stay there until further developments. That was his words. I remember that very distinctly, that he told me, and when I got back and got out of there, I was trying to get some of this rescue crew down towards Matecumbe, because there was injured and dead and everything else down there, and there hadn't been anybody down there --

Q When did the rescue crew get there?

A To Matecumbe?

Q No; to where you were.

A To Islamorada?

Q Yes.

A Well, the first two men I saw down there were W. P. Moody, and he brought a boat in; and as I was going out I saw Fred Pine.

Q They were in a boat?

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A Moody came down in a boat; I don't know how Pine got there. I understand Pine had been there all the night before, but Moody brought a boat right in there to the Matecumbe Hotel.

Q A big boat?

A A small boat. And they were getting ready to load a couple of the seriously injured onto the boat; one of them had a broken back; onto the boat. You see, naturally I was trying to get out as soon as I could.

Q How did you get out?

A I walked up -- there was a boy from Homestead that got down there, a Simmons boy; that is the first I knew the kickers had been in there.

Q Got down to what?

A The Matecumbe Hotel.

Q What did he get down in?

A In a kicker.

Q What is a kicker?

A A small outboard boat. Now, I want to tell you this, too, as it has been told to me. There were a group of ten men from Homestead who got down there just at dusk Tuesday night, and worked all night long with one little boat, and brought across 160 out of Camp 1, across Snake Creek. He was one of that group. Of course, the way I got out, by that time the American Legion had some boats across Whale Harbor, and I walked up to Whale Harbor and right up to Snake Creek, and rode across there, and there were thousands there to take me, then.

How he
got out

Q You mean people came down in automobiles?

A Yes. There were automobiles lined up there for two miles, ambulances and everything else, but here's the thing. That Homestead group were the first to get down there. They went down and got there just about dusk, Tuesday night, worked all night long, pulling them out, and sending them in in an ambulance, and Dr. J. A. Smith, the county physician, was attending to them, and sending them back to Homestead, and in Homestead they were setting up hospitals, and the minute that damn National Guard -- and if you will pardon me, that's what it is -- they came up and said "What are you doing here?" and they said "We have been getting them out", and they said "We will take charge of this", and they actually ran that Homestead crew out; and I want to say this, and it has been said several times, and I would like to communicate it to you, that in case another one should hit those keys, there are 100 men in Homestead and vicinity, those old "Crackers" down there who know those storms, and know how to go through them, and know those waters down there, and so on and so forth, without the aid of your Red Cross, your National Guard or anything else on this end, could have had everything off of there in two days, because they know the country, and they knew what they were doing; and the National Guard -- I saw some of those myself, and I have got authentic statements for other parts of it -- all they done was to go down there and get drunk and get in the way and stop the ambulances from getting out. I don't know if you are interested in that or not, but it is all the truth. Here's what a group of

Homestead citizens told me last night; they would like to have the Federal Government, the State Government, or somebody, appoint a man in Homestead to take charge of things, in case of one of those hurricanes, and to get things organized. These ten men that went down there, and all of them, were young fellows; they were members of the Homestead Fire Department: Dr. J. A. Smith; Dave Barnes, a one-armed boat driver, he is a fisherman and a farmer down there.

Q Coming back, Mr. Johns, these warnings started on Saturday?

A Yes, sir; that's right.

Q They indicated the storm?

A At one time it was supposed to be about 465 miles, I think it was, east of Havana.

Q Yes; until one o'clock Monday the thought was that the storm was going through the Florida straits.

A Yes, sir; that's right.

Q And it would not affect the Keys, or Key West.

A That's right.

Q That was your information?

A That was my information.

Q That was Sheldon's information?

A That was Sheldon's information. It must have been.

Q And it was not until 4:30 o'clock that advices came forward to the effect that the thing was coming northwest, and probably would hit the keys?

A No; it was before that, because at 1:00 o'clock Monday afternoon the Miami weather bureau here put out a broadcast that gale warnings were up from Key Largo to Key West, and hurricane warnings in Key West. That was at One o'clock.

Q Let me see if I can get this clear. That at the time of the one o'clock warning it was not thought that the hurricane would hit the keys until late Monday night or Tuesday?

A Late Monday night or Tuesday.

Q So that cars ordered out to take those men out at around one o'clock on Monday were thought to have been ordered in plenty of time?

A Oh, yes. That's right. They should have been in plenty of time. The storm curved and came in there a lot quicker than people thought it was going to.

Q Do you think Sheldon should have ordered those cars in there earlier to get those men out?

A Well, if Sheldon was the man to do the ordering, I would say Sheldon should have got those men out of there Monday morning.

Q Why? You didn't think the thing was coming until Tuesday, if at all, or late Monday night, and nobody knew it until one o'clock, did they?

A No; but at the same time, why wait until the last minute to move - -

Q Well, it wasn't the last minute.

A Well, say the last few hours, then-- to move a

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Argues
E. H. Hines?

large group of men like that.

Q Did you think Key West should have been evacuated and people should have been brought out of there?

A According to that one o'clock advisory, yes, because I remember that I thought, "Well, I don't know what's going to happen to Key West with a hurricane down there". Now, the thought had occurred to me after I had called Sheldon, I had expected from then on, when I called Sheldon Monday morning, I expected at any minute to hear of that train leaving, because I knew that those Keys, especially where the camps are, was so narrow that it wouldn't take an awful lot of wind to blow those men right out of there, especially if a tidal wave accompanied it.

Q Well, had you had any tidal wave down there before?

A Well, the only tidal wave I ever heard of before was the one at Miami Beach in 1926.

Q Has that part of the country ever had a tidal wave?

A Not that I know of.

Q Why would you have expected a tidal wave to have washed over this time?

A Well, because every time we hear of a hurricane down here we expect a tidal wave to come along; sometimes it comes and sometimes it don't; sometimes we get a warning here that a hurricane is coming and is going to hit Miami, and everything is boarded up, and then the thing suddenly curved off the other way, but at the same time, that has been the whole trouble with this country, that when these warnings begin, people don't start soon

enough to prepare everything for them. If they started soon enough - in a city, that's where a lot of your people get hurt; they are out in the wind boarding up.

Q This wind, then, behaved in an unexpected manner and came a lot sooner than it was expected?

A Truthfully, I don't believe, as it was, that it was anybody's fault other than the fact that - -

Q Looking at it from the facts now, and with our hindsight, there are a lot of things we could have done?

A Yes, that's right.

Q But under the present plan, you don't think it was anybody's fault?

A I don't think it was anybody's fault; if I had been doing it, possibly I would have gone ahead and moved those men out. Those men haven't been doing any work to amount to anything, anyway, and especially after the holiday they were drunk, and it had been raining.

Q It would have been pretty hard to move them, too, wouldn't it?

A Well, yes and no. Of course, now we look back, but at the same time, I just can't see, myself, why, with groups in those frail camps - -

Q You mean to say you wish they had all been moved, like we all do?

A Yes, sir; we all wish they had been moved.
MR. WILLIAMS: That's all.
(Witness excused).