

Statement of Ernest Blunk, taken in
office of Prosecuting Attorney, on
March 3, 1934. Questioning by
Mr. Estill and deputy prosecuting
attorneys.

Mr. Vance:

- Q Your name is -
A Ernest Blunk.
Q Well, Blunk, you were back in the jail there, at the time
this fellow came out?
A Well, when Sam called me back in the jail, I was up finger
printing three prisoners.
Q Up in the receiving room?
A In the receiving room; finger printing three prisoners.
Q Where did Sam come to when he called you there?
A He stood right at the foot of the iron stairs.
Q What did he say to you?
A He said "Blunk." I said, "What do you want, Sam?", and
Sam didn't answer me. I walked back there.
Q Did you see anybody else besides Sam?
A Nobody at all.
Q And when you walked back there, what did you ~~say~~ see?
A Dillinger was standing to the left, and Youngblood was
standing to the right.
Q To the left of what?
A The hallway there, there are steps to the right and left.
Q Dillinger was standing to the left, of the steps, on the
platform?
A Dillinger was standing to the left.
Q And the negro was standing on the steps to the right?
A The negro was standing on the steps to the right.
Q What was said there?
A I looked at John, and I looked over and saw the negro, and I
started to wheel around to Dillinger, and Sam said,
"He has got it on you, kid, go inside."
Q Did Dillinger display anything to you?
A It looked like he had something in his hand; I looked back a
second time, and he had it on me.
Q What did he say in there, if anything?
A "Go in there, you son-of-a-bitch".
Q What he had in his hand - did you see it at the time?
A I saw something black in his hand, I couldn't tell what it was.
Q When you say "he had it on you" -
A The thing he had on me, he shoved in my stomach (indicating
towards the left side); I was around a little further
because I had turned completely around.
Q And the colored fellow was to the south?
A Yes, on the steps.
Q Did Dillinger come around the steps?
A Followed me right across, he stood by the door, I walked on
down, walked in the second cell.
Q What did Sam do?
A Locked the doors - somebody locked the cell.
Q Did Sam go in the cell with you?
A Not at that time.
Q Did anyone else go in the cell?
A There were two colored porters and one deputy.
Q What is the deputy's name?
A I don't know, one of the special guards.
Q Did Dillinger say anything more to you at that time?
A Not at that time.

Q Then what did you next observe?

A Well, after I got in the cells there, I asked the fellows what it was he had, and they said a .45, and I said, "Where the hell did he get it?" "I don't know", they said.

Mr. Regan:

Q Who were you talking to?

A The one guard and the two colored trusties that were locked in that cell.

Mr. Vance:

Q What did Sam do, if you know?

A Well, Sam came back with the three prisoners that I was finger printing, and locked them in the cell.

Q Who were they?

A I don't recall what their names are, right now; I think the cards are still down there with them.

Q Are they out of that felony block?

A No.

Mr. Estill:

Q ~~Mr~~ Have you got any keys?

A Yes, (giving the keys to Mr. Estill). When I locked the doors, he said, "Stick the keys in your pocket." This key goes to the receiving room, and the other to the kitchen door.

Q Are these all the keys you have?

A Yes, that No. 2 key fits that steel door.

Mr. Vance:

Q One is for the receiving room and the main office, and the other is for the main door to the kitchen office?

A Yes.

Q How about the trusties' room, is there a key for that?

A There is no key for that, that I know.

Q Do either of these keys fit the trusties' door?

A Not that I know of.

Q Do you know anything about any keys for those quarters?

A I do not.

Q Well, then, was Cahoon put in the cell block there in the back?

A Yes, and I was taken out.

Q How did he happen to put Cahoon in there, if you know?

A He told me later that Sam told him to go ahead and kill him, he wasn't going to call anybody else back there.

Q When did he tell you that?

A On the highway.

Q Billinger told you that?

A Dillinger told me that, in the presence of Ed Saager.

Mr. Vance:

Q Then what did he say to you?

A He just told me to come out; I came out where No. 2 door is.

Q Which door is that?

A You know, there is a barred door, as you come up to the top of the landing -

Q Yes.

Q And you open that door before you come to the locker box.

Q Yes.

A That is No. 2.

Q You came out that door?

A Yes.

Q That door wasn't locked?

A That door wasn't locked; there weren't doors locked, only the cell doors.

Q How about the steel door that goes into the corridor, that is No. 1 door, I guess they call that?

A That is No. 2, too, that door is not locked.

Q Well, did he lock that door at any time, to your knowledge? You know the one I mean, the one that goes into the corridor, into the cell block?

A No, not to the best of my knowledge.

Q And the cell door, was that locked after he put you in there?

A Yes.

Q How is that locked, from the box?

A That locks from the box.

Q Control box?

Q Yes.

Q Do you know who opened that up when he got you out of there?

A I do not.

Q Did he put Cahoon in and take you out at the same time?

A Yes.

Q What did he say to you when he started to take you out?

A He just told me to come out.

Q And you came out?

A Yes.

Q Did he display any gun at that time?

A No, he didn't; he kept his hand in his pocket.

Q Then where did he go, or say for you to do?

A When I got out to the locker box, he told me to lock the box, and I locked it.

Q That is the cell doors?

A Yes, he said, "Now, listen, Blunk, you and I are in reverse positions", he said, "I have got it all to gain, and you have got it all to lose, I don't know whether you are afraid to die or not", he said, "You have got a wife and baby at home. Now is the time to think about it, do what I tell you to and I won't hurt you; if you don't, I will kill you right now."

Mr. Regan:

Q Now did he get his information on you ~~having~~ having a wife and baby?

A I don't know.

Mr. Vance:

Q What did you say to him?

A I said, "Johnnie, you can never make it, they will kill you before you get out of this place." He said, "Well, I have got it all to gain, I have got nothing to lose". He said, "You call Lew Baker back here."

Mr. Regan:

Q How much time was consumed up to this time?

A Well, things were happening so fast that - I imagine, altogether it took something like ten or fifteen minutes, at the most, ~~to~~ for the whole proceedings.

Q That is so far as you are concerned?

A Yes.

Mr. Vance:

Q How long did he converse with you after he got you out?

A Just long enough to say those few words.

(Tom Kennedy here came in and got the keys from Mr. Blunk, and Mr. Blunk said that Youngblood threw some other keys out on the highway, south, after they passed St. John).

Mr. Blunk: You see, after I locked them in the cell block, Youngblood took the keys, and after we got in the ditch, Ed put the chains on, and I said, "Herb, what did you do with the keys?" He said, "I dropped them on the jail floor, in the garage." I said, "I thought you threw them out the window." He said, "I didn't." Ed told me he threw them out.

Q Now, after you were told to call Baker, what did you do, Blunk?

A He said, "Look down the hallway and see if there is anybody down there", and I stepped down the hallway, and he said, "Anybody there?" and I said "No." He said, "Back up there against that cement abutment," and I said "All right", and he stepped across and got in the same position he was when I was brought down there.

Q That is, across to the south of that platform?

A Well, he was just on the steps, and he said, "Now call Baker." So I called Baker.

Q Where did you go to call Baker?

A I stood right there at that cement abutment, right along the steps.

Q What did you say to him?

A I said, "Oh, Lew", or words to that effect. I may have hollered "Baker" instead of "Lew". He said, "All right, Ernie". He started back there, and John said, "Now, you go up on the other steps there."

Q To whom did he say that?

A To me; I got up there, in this position (indicating); Youngblood gave me a shove, and there was a scuffle.

Q Between whom?

A Baker and Dillinger, and I turned around to look, and Baker had Dillinger by the throat and had something poking in his side -

Q Baker had Dillinger -

A No, Dillinger had Baker, and had something in his ribs, I couldn't see what it was, and said "Go inside, you son-of-a-bitch", and Lew got in.

Q Did Lew answer you when you called him?

A He said "All right, Ernie."

Q Is that all you said, "Lew"? Did you say anything to him like, "I want to see you a minute?"

A No, not that I can recall.

Q Did you go down that corridon any distance to call him?

A Not a bit.

Q How far were you from the door, when you called Baker for Dillinger?

A Just a distance from the wall, just a matter of four or five feet, I don't imagine it is over four or five feet.

Q And Then Baker came down?

A Baker came down.

Q What did you do with Baker?

A He told me to open the doors, I opened the doors; He took Baker back and put him in No. 2 cell, told me to close the doors, and I closed the doors.

Q Was that the same cell he put you in?

A The same cell he put me in.

Q Was that the same cell that he had the other fellows in, Sam -

A Yes, the same cell.

Q Then what?

A Then he said to me, "Where is the tommie?" I said, "To the best of my knowledge, they are locked up in the main cabinet," and he said, "Have you got a key for that?" I said "No, I haven't." He said, "Who else is out there?"

- I said, "I don't know, there should be two."
- Q Two what, two people?
- A Yes, out in the office. He said, "Let's walk down that way," so I took the lead, and he had something in my back which later proved to be this phony gun, and I walked down to the penal farm section, and he stepped to the hallway -
- Q Where is that with reference to the trusties(section?
- A Right straight across the door.
- Q On the north side?
- A On the north side; and he started to call the trusties out, and he said to me, "Get them all out there"; I said, "Come on, boys", and they came out.
- Q How many of them were there, if you know?
- A I don't know; I imagine there must have been six or seven, anyway; they came out and walked back to the criminal section, and I unlocked the doors when he told me to, and they got in the cells, as he told them to, and he told me to lock the doors again, and I locked the doors.
- Q Where was this colored fellow?
- A He was right behind Johnnie.
- Q Did he go with you to the trusties' section?
- A Yes.
- Q Did he have anything with him?
- A He had a club.
- Q What kind of a club?
- A I really don't know; it may have been a broom stick, or a handle off of a mop.
- Q Then what?
- A Well, we proceeded again to the ~~erim~~ penal farm section, and I called Butch Houk.
- Q Now, these five or six trusties, were they up in the cell too?
- A I think they were put in No. 3 cell; I called Matt Brown sometime around there.
- Q Was that after you called the trusties?
- A I think I took Matt the same time I took the trusties.
- Q Where was Matt?
- A He was standing outside the receiving door, in the warden's office.
- Q So it was necessary ^{for the doorman} to unlock the door, and let Matt Brown through?
- A Yes; I think Matt came through with the trusties.
- Q Well, the trusties didn't have to go through that door?
- A No, they were in the trusties' section.
- Q And did you lock the cells up again?
- A I closed the doors on them, I never locked the doors tight at any time.
- Q You closed it with the lever?
- A ~~Get~~ Closed it with the lever.
- Q And then what did you do?
- A Well, we walked back down to the penal farm section, and I called Kenneth Houk.
- Q Where did you go to call Houk?
- A I was standing possibly five feet ~~ef~~ just east of the penal farm door.
- Q East, that would be?
- A That would be up to the corridor. After he walked me up to the penal farm door, then he made me back up.
- Q Back up which way?
- A Back up towards the criminal section.
- Q Where did he go?
- A He stood in the penal farm door, just back out the side.
- Q Did he tell you to call any other individual?
- A He told me to call those out of the office.
- Q Did he tell you to call them all at the same time?
- A No, one at a time. I called Butch Houk; Butch left his gun

in the Warden's office, and came back, came past the penal farm door, and John jumped out on him and shoved the door back, and Butch started to fight, and Dillinger said, "I will kill you, you son-of-a-bitch, if you don't get in there."

Q How did he start to fight?

A He turned around and started to grab him, and Butch put his hands up and walked into the criminal section. He put him in the criminal section.

Q Did you open the door again?

A I opened the door again, and locked it again.

Q Then what did you do?

A Dillinger went in again and asked Butch where the "tommies" were; Butch told him in the office.

Q Did you go with him?

A I was standing there; after he asked him, Butch said "They are up on the shelf." He said, "How many more are there in the office?" Butch said "One." He said, "All right, Blunk, go and call that man back."

Q Did you go?

A I went down to the penal farm section with him, and he walked a little further, then he had before, and he told me to call him down. I called Marshall.

Q Did you call him by name?

A I called him by name.

Q Did you see the turn key, in each instance, open the door there that connects the receiving room?

A I did.

Q Did you say anything to him?

A I did not.

Q Did he say anything to you?

A He did not.

Q Then what happened?

A Well, there was another scuffle; Marshall was going to scuffle with him.

Q Where did that scuffle take place?

A About two or three feet east of the penal farm section.

Q What did Dillinger say, or do, if anything?

A Dillinger told him to go on down there or he would kill him, and I said to Marshall, "It looks like he has got it on you, Marshall."

Q And then proceeded to take him to the cells in the rear?

A Yes.

Q Did you go through the same process again, of opening the doors and closing them?

A Yes.

Q Was anything said, by Dillinger, more than that to you, each time?

A No, only to look down the hall each time, and see if it was clear.

Q Then what did you do?

A He walked right behind me, to the receiving room, and told me to walk over to the door, and the doorman came out, and he said, "Make him open the door."

Q Where was Dillinger at that time?

A Right behind me; I told the door man to open the door.

Q What were the words you used that time?

A I said "Open the door."

Q And when he opened the door, then what?

A He walked into the Warden's office.

Q Did you walk in too?

A I walked in, and too, ahead of him; I was always ahead of him.

Q At the time the door was opened, he was standing at the door with you?

A Right behind me.

- Q In plain view of the fellow at the door?
A I was standing at this side of the door, and he was standing behind me, with this gun in my back.
- Q What I am trying to get at - the fellow at the door couldn't help but see him, in plain view of you?
A Well, I don't see how he could help but see.
- Q Did he hesitate about opening the door?
A He kind of looked back, and Dillinger poked me with the gun again, and I said "Open the door."
- Q Did Dillinger say anything at this time?
A No.
- Q And he opened the door, and you went in?
A Dillinger followed me, and Youngblood behind him.
- Q Did you go into the office where the clock is, and the desk?
A Yes.
- Q Who was the turnkey there, if you know?
A I don't remember what his name is.
- Q What did you do then?
A John picked up the machine guns and told us to turn around and stick our hands up.
- Q What do you mean "turn around"?
A With our face to the wall.
- Q Who ~~was~~ there?
A The turnkey and myself.
- Q Was anyone else there except you and the turnkey?
A That's all.
- Q Did Dillinger take both machine guns?
A He took one and looked it over, and Youngblood said, "Here is another one", and He handed the one he was looking over, to Youngblood, and he picked it up and looked it over, and he said, "Go on back here."
- Q To whom did he say that?
A To the turnkey and I; we went back to the criminal section.
- Q Anyone else go back with you, besides you and the turnkey and Dillinger?
A And Youngblood.
- Qn Anybody else?
A No, just the four of us.
- Q Do you remember anything about any third fellow being in the office and going back there?
A No.
- Q Then you went back to the criminal section, and then what?
A We went back to the criminal section, and he told me to open the doors, and I opened them, and then he put me in the same cell with Sam and Lew and the turnkey, and he showed us the machine guns and told us that was what he was wanting, and how well he liked them, and then he said, "Now I am going to show you how tough your damn jail is to crack", and showed us the pistol, and hit it against the bar.
- Q Were you in the cell?
A I was in the cell at that time.
- Q And how about the turnkey?
A He was in the cell also.
- Q Did anybody lock the doors behind you?
A No, they were all open.
- Q Did Youngblood go down there too, into the corridor of this cell?
A He was just a little ways in back of John, and Dillinger said, "If any of you fellows ~~he~~ think I have got a gun on me, besides this wooden gun, come on out and searchme."
- Q Nobody searched him though?
A Sam said, "Well, he has got plenty of guts." Then he said, "Come on, Blunk".
- Q And you went out?
A I went out of the cell, and then he said, "Shut the doors", and then he said, "Wait a minute", "Are there any of you fellows

that want to go on?" There were three or four fellows, one of them backed out after we had the door shut and locked, and Dillinger said, "The hell you are going to back out, you started, now you are going ~~to~~ the whole way. Come on, you", so we came out to the kitchen door. I talked to John outside of the kitchen door, I said, "John, there isn't a chance in the world, when I open that door and go out there, they will kill you."

Q Now, when you and Youngblood and the turnkey went back to the felony section, was the door open, the outer office, and the receiving room, left unlocked or not?

A It was.

Q Where were the keys to that door?

A Hanging in the door.

Q You left them hanging there, did you?

A Yes.

Q Were they taken away from there at any time?

A Yes.

Q Who took them?

A I did.

Q And when did you do that?

A After we had made our second trip back to the main office, from the garage; that is when we locked all the guards from the front house back there, the trusties w that were in the kitchen.

Q Did you take those keys with you?

A I did.

Q Do you have them with you now?

A I g just gave them to Tom Kennedy.

Q And those were the keys to the doors between -

A Between the kitchen and the receiving room.

Q Between the receiving room and the office? Now, when you had that conversation there, before you went into the kitchen, you told him he couldn't make it, or he would be killed, what did he say?

A He said, "Well, I am going to make it."

Q Did he have a machine gun at that time?

A He had a machine gun at that time.

Q Was the door open, the kitchen, locked or unlocked?

A It was.

Q Who unlocked that?

A I did; I took the key out of the receiving room door and unlocked it.

Q Who went out into the kitchen, who went out first?

A I did; Dillinger was right behind me; when I got out ~~of~~ ^{of} the kitchen, he gave me a shove sideways, and told the boys to stick them up.

Q Who was out there in the kitchen?

A Bill Zeiger and two deputies.

Q Some of the special guards?

A Yes.

Q Do you recall who they were?

A I don't recall their names.

Q And did they put them up?

A Yes.

Q Did they pull their firearms at any time?

A They didn't.

Q Did you notice where they had their guns?

A One fellow had a gun in his side coat pocket; Dillinger told ~~him~~ ^{me} to ~~give~~ ^{get} that gun out of his coat pocket,, and he said, "Keep your fingers away from the trigger of it, take it with two fingers", and I did; laid it down on the table. He told Herbert Youngblood to pick it up. I think there was one trusty back there too; he told them to get in the pantry, that little closet

like, and get their coats and hats out of there; they got in there and gave him the coats and hats.

Q How many did they get?

A I don't know, but each one picked out a coat and cap.

Q What kind of a coat did Dillinger pick out?

A A brown raincoat.

Q What kind of a hat?

A A dark cap, with guards on the front of it.

Q Whose coat and cap was it, do you know?

A I don't know; and he told me to lead the way to the garage.

Q How about these fellows that were in the -

A They were to be locked in the closet, the door wouldn't lock, so they followed us to the garage.

Q Did he tell them to follow?

A No, they just came along voluntarily behind us. I led the way to the garage; prior to that time, he had asked Baker where the keys were to the cars; Baker told him they were in the cars; so I led the way into the garage and we got down there and he said, "I want a car right now."

Q Did he ask you where the garage was?

A He knew it was down below; and he told the garageman to start a car up and get it running.

Q Who was the garageman?

A John Hudak, and he started to open the doors, and he said, "Don't open the doors until you get the car on the runway first," so John said, "There are no keys in the cars." He said, "Where are the keys?" He said, "They are in the main office," so he said, "All right, Blunk, you and I will go and get the keys". I said, "I don't know where they are." He said to the garage man, "Do you know where they are at?" He said, "I think I do", and he said, "All right, we will go up and get them, and you stay here", to Herbert. So I led the way to the kitchen.

Q How about these people that followed out?

A They were still there. When I got to the kitchen, the national guards and special guards out of the front house came in.

Q Out of the residence portion of the jail?

A Yes.

Q They came into the kitchen? How many were there?

A I think there were four guards, three or four guards, and some trusties; the trusties had been alarmed because they couldn't get into the jail office. They went in and got these guardsmen, and when they came in, John turned the machine gun on them and told them to stick them up, and said, "You get their guns, Blunk", and I got their guns and laid them on the cooking tables, and he picked them up.

Q How many guns did you have?

A Two.

Q And there were two guns taken off the two fellows then?

A I don't know whether there were two or three, if I am not mistaken; altogether they had five guns.

Mr. Havran:

Q Did he take any guns off of the two guards that walked back when you called them back?

A Oh, no, they never carry a gun back there, it is against the rules of the jail.

Mr. Vance: Now, going back to where you returned to the kitchen, and these fellows came out and John stuck a machine gun on them and told them to stick them up.

A Mike Miller kept going at him, and John told him to get back, and I said, "Mike, he will kill you", and Mike opened his

Crown Point, Indiana

October 27th, 1934

I, Terry Helmar, being duly sworn, swear and say:

That prior to the 3rd day of March, 1934, the day of the Dillinger escape from the Lake County jail, together with my wife, operated a gasoline filling station and Barbeque Stand, five miles north of Crown Point, Indiana, at the south east corner of the intersection of Highways 30 and 55. That at a number of times prior to the 3rd day of March, 1934, Louis Piquett, attorney for Dillinger, Arthur O'Leary, his investigator, Warden Lewis Baker of Lake County jail, _____ Burns, Ernest Blunk and Leonard M. Matthews met at this place together. I have seen them there together at least _____ times before the day of the break. At our place, at the time, were my wife and step daughter. My wife's name is _____ Helmar and my step daughter's name is Marian _____.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 27th day of October, 1934.

My commission expires:

Notary Public