

[DRAFT - Not in final form or final order. Refer also to my notes on the book.]

ORIGIN OF BOOK - CHRONOLOGY:

- (1) Please put the following events in order, with dates:
- (A) Your decision to do a book on Oswald
 - (B) Your interest in the question of the reason for Oswald's defection as central
 - (C) Your interest in Oswald's time in Japan
 - (D) Your first contact with the Reader's Digest
[RD, 3/78 p. 14, says that Epstein agreed to do their project in October 1975]
 - (E) Your first review of the documents in the Archives
 - (F) Your first contact with Nosenko, and your first interest in him
 - (G) Your first interest in, and contact with, Angleton
[See my notes on the apparent conflicts between the Digest and NY and the book on the sequence of these key events. The Digest says that after EJE started in on the documents, he began to make contact with former intelligence people. The book says he started his research with Nosenko. NY says the CIA put him on to Nosenko, presumably because they heard he was doing a book on Oswald, and that JJA talked to him because he had gotten the 'false' story from Nosenko.]

[Other possibly useful dates:]

January 1976: Barron recommends he talk to Thomas Fox, DIA (AOF, p. 318)

Feb. 16 & 25, 1976: EJE in Southern California; researcher calls

PLH; interest in Russian "or even American" intelligence.

December 1976: RD editor assigned to find Oswald's fellow Marines (RD 14-5)

Spring 1976: First interview with DeMohrenschildt

Comment: there's more here than meets the eye.

SOURCES:

NOSENKO:

- (2) What did Nosenko say during your 4-hour interview?

(3) At that time, were you aware of Dan Schorr's report (CBS News, approx. 5/11/75; Wash. Post/S.F. Chronicle, 5/12/75) that McCone had told him "that his counterintelligence officers suspected Nosenko might be a plant to exonerate the Soviets of conspiracy" but that McCone "now says that Nosenko's bona fides 'subsequently were proven'."? If not, when did you learn that doubts about Nosenko had been made public?

(4) Your book reports that Hoover initially refused to ask Nosenko the 44 questions. When were those questions first asked? When did the CIA take control of Nosenko (i.e., so that they did not have to clear the questions with Hoover)? Did non-Angleton people in the CIA at any time refuse to ask him those questions? [The book is quite sneaky on this; the 44 questions are brought up only to prove Hoover's reluctance to 'break' Nosenko, and then more or less forgotten, as if Nosenko had not returned to CIA custody rather soon.]

(5) What were Nosenko's answers to the 44 questions the first time the CIA asked them? The last time? When you asked them, if you did? (If you didn't, why not? Were you aware of them at the time?)

(6) Were the 44 questions ever given to the Warren Commission? Was the Commission ever asked to overrule Hoover on that matter?

(7) In what document do the 44 questions appear? [They looked sort of familiar to me, but I haven't found them in the CIA's LHO file. Obviously Epstein did get some Nosenko documents not in that file.]

OTHER:

(8) Did Angleton, Helms, Sullivan, and other former government people place any restrictions on your use of what they told you?

(9) Did any individual or agency have the right to review your book before

publication? (If so, were any changes required?)

(10) Besides the U-2, Nosenko's defection, and the Helms-Warren meeting, what did Helms tell you that might be relevant to the assassination? Specifically, did you ask him about "the whole Bay of Pigs thing"? If not, why not?

* (11) In "Agency of Fear" (p. 9), you persuasively explained why you felt that you had to reveal your sources, and comment critically on them. What is different about "Legend"?

(12) Specifically, why did you provide non-specific references to the 26 volumes (e.g., volume number alone), and in many cases omit references completely?

* (13) Are you concerned about the possibility that you were used by Angleton and others to present a one-sided picture of a complex story?

* (14) What or who gave you the idea of a graphological analysis of some of Oswald's writings? Did anyone evaluate the scientific validity of such methods for you? Are you aware of CIA document 1013-406, which reveals that an unnamed CIA staff employee suggested (on or around December 23, 1966) a graphological assessment of Oswald's handwriting. Do you know who made that suggestion (which was rejected at the time)?

* (15) What is the source for your statement that Hoover deliberately played down the possibility of a KGB connection for the purpose of avoiding additional criticism of his bureau? Did you talk to Sullivan about this?

(16) Are you aware of any documents in the recent FBI release which substantiate this view?

(17) Are you aware the the FBI's Summary Report not only explained that the FBI's investigation of Oswald on his return was for the purpose of learning if he had been recruited by the KGB, but that Hoover volunteered information that Oswald considered the money he had received from the Russian government as payment for his denunciation of the U.S.?

(18) Do you ever intend to make your interview transcripts available?

* (19) Have you appeared, or do you expect to appear, before the House Select Committee on Assassinations and/or the Senate Intelligence Committee?

(20) Why did you take credit for many documents released under the FOIA when in fact they were previously obtained as a result of the requests of other researchers?

(21) For example, how did you learn of the Coleman-Slawson memo? Did you ever file a FOIA request for it? If so, when?

(22) What documents on Oswald or the JFK case (as opposed to Nosenko) were released as a result of your FOIA requests?

(23) Did you really expect the CIA to answer the questions in your Appendix D, since it is obvious that they are not requests for records, as required by the FOIA?

(24) Specifically, why were not some of those questions rephrased in the form of requests for records (e.g., all records relating to comments by Moore on Oswald, or all records relating to intercepted mail)? [I have a request for the mail-interception records pending (since June 1976).]

(25) How did you learn what the CIA told the Rockefeller Commission about their Mexico City cameras? [Page 327, note 8. I think the testimony, and some of the details in this note, have not been made public.]

* (26) What is your source for the claim that Angleton's people had intercepted Oswald's 11/26/59 letter to his brother (p. 103), a later letter mentioning that Powers has been seen in Moscow (~~px 169~~), and that they had the return address of a letter to Marina from Ella Sobleva (p. 169)? [The source on the Powers letter is New York, 2/27/78, p. 30.] How come nobody knew about these interceptions before?

(27) Where did you get the [readily disprovable] idea that JFK's car was accelerating sharply at frame 313? [P. 332]

(28) At the time you sent question 17 to the CIA (asking if they had intercepted any letters from Oswald), were you aware that (as you have stated; see #26) that Angleton's people had intercepted such letters? If so, why did you ask that question?

(29) Are you aware that the CIA has at least once denied intercepting any

of the letters Oswald wrote? What do you make of this lack of candor?

(30) Incidentally, are you aware of the Hoch memo on the CIA and the Warren Commission?

(31) You referred to getting various CIA traces. Do you mean they were done for you, or that they were in the general release of documents which you got?

(32) Did you actually see the Oswald photo DeMohrenschildt gave you permission to see? [Sylvia Meagher says the photo is published in Oltmans' Dutch book.] Who did the handwriting analysis you referred to?

(33) Where is Voloshin in Oswald's address book? [I can't find it! CD 680 includes a trace on Voloshin because he signed the Lumumba letter, CE 72, but there is no reference to an address book entry.]

THE LEGEND:

(34) Is it plausible to you that someone living a KGB legend would be allowed to take back photos of his high life in Minsk, that he would write "microdots" in his notebook, etc?

* (35) Why do you refer to Oswald's diary reference to McVickar as an anachronism, implying that you had discovered a flaw in the "legend," when it is quite obvious from the language of the diary itself that it was being written after the events described - that is, evidently no attempt was made to pass the diary off as contemporaneous? [P. 109-10; NY 3/6 p. 56; cf. CE 24 (16H96)]

(36) Why didn't you give citations to that evidence, or reproduce that diary entry?

(37) Do you consider questions like these part of a CIA campaign to make your research appear slipshod? (NY 2/27, p. 37)

(38) If you were concerned about such a campaign, why didn't you take greater pains to clean up your book? Are you now aware, for example, that Marina's alleged statement, as discussed on p. 13, was discussed in the Warren Commission session of 1/21/64, not 1/27, and that the transcript as released refers to a suggestion that "he" [LHO] rather than "she" [Marina] might have been a Soviet agent?

(39) If Voloshin was sinister, why would he sign what is essentially a form letter to Oswald, over someone else's typed name? Anyhow, why didn't you give a citation to that letter [CE 72]?

OSWALD AND U.S. INTELLIGENCE:

* (40) Do you have any suspicions in this area which were left out of the book? [If so, why?]

(41) Why do you overemphasize the CIA connections of Richard Snyder, and the government connections of Priscilla Johnson (who tends to get upset at such charges), while minimizing the intelligence angles in the cases of Dr. Davison & Spas T. Raikin?

(42) How do you interpret the evident lack of concern shown by the Angleton people about the intercepted letters? Did you ask Angleton if that information was passed on to the FBI? Was he concerned about the reference to Powers at the time?

* (43) What do you really think of the missing investigation after Oswald's defection?

(44) You wonder about the possible debriefing of Webster. Are you aware that there are references in the CIA Oswald traces to information apparently obtained from Webster, which seems to establish that he was debriefed?

(45) Did Angleton and Helms get concerned about the U-2 angle in 1963-4? Was the Warren Commission told?

(46) What justifies putting 'from the Soviets' at the end of the quote from the Gale memo? [See my notes on p. 14, on p. 7 supra.]

(47) Did you find out anything about the CIA sending Oswald to the Monterey Language School? [This was reported, pre-publication, in New Times.]

(48) Do you now suspect that Oswald was ever a U.S. intelligence agent?

THE WAR OF THE MOLES:

(49) As far as you know, does Angleton have a specific suspect in mind as the KGB's CIA mole?

(50) Do you know who that suspect is?

(51) Why did you focus on the role of Desmond Fitzgerald in the Cubela matter? Why, for example, did you imply that it was just his decision to present himself as an emissary of Robert Kennedy? Did you ask Helms about his part in that decision (as documented in the Schweiker Report)? Overall, how do you evaluate Fitzgerald's role?

* (52) Honestly now, isn't Angleton a bit odd?

(53) Are you aware of Angleton's recent charges (e.g., against the Church Committee) made in his role as chairman of the Intelligence and Security Fund?

(54) You suggest that the Angleton faction would have wanted drastic action against Nosenko, such as deporting him back to the Soviet Bloc. Don't you think something a little more drastic would have been done? [I think Epstein was playing games here. If Nosenko was genuine, returning him would have been equivalent to a death sentence. My recollection of the Copeland book is that double agents like that frequently come up with heart attacks.]

ODDS AND ENDS:

* (55) "What did a high intelligence official learn, soon after Oswald arrived in the Soviet Union, that caused him to tell Epstein: 'It blew me out of my chair!'" [This is from a pre-publication blurb, and I don't recall seeing it in the book.]

(56) Is David Frost still doing a four-part TV docudrama? [Also from the publisher's blurb.]

(57) What experience does Jones Harris have that you found of enormous benefit concerning Oswald in Japan? [P. xv]

* (58) Were you the source of the third article in New York on the War of the Moles? [3/13, about the recent capture of a top US spy in Russia.]

[These questions are pretty much off the top of my head; refer also to my notes and the review Russ Stetler and I have done.]

[Obviously there are many more questions that could be asked. Not yet having seen Epstein on TV, I have no idea how he actually responds to questions. It might be useful for us to have a concise and pointed list of questions to share. I'm willing to accept the risk that Epstein will consider me a CIA agent.]

[Before I get back to systematic notes on the book, here are some points which have come up over the past few days. Refer also to my 'appendix' of questions for Epstein, and the review Russ Stetler and I have done.]

In checking out one of Epstein's allegations, I have come across what I considered to be an incredibly sleazy and indefensible piece of 'scholarship.' Note the implications of the underlined words from pages 109-110:

"A microscopic examination of Oswald's handwriting in this diary indicates that the entire manuscript was written in one or two sessions. The misdating of a number of events shows that the writing took place at least one year after the events described. For example, in the October 31, 1959, entry Oswald discusses his visit to the United States Embassy in Moscow that day and notes in passing that John McVickar had replaced Richard Snyder as "head consul." This change he points to did not occur, however, until August 1961, twenty months later, when Snyder was recalled to Washington. Another anachronism appears [in the entry for January 5, 1960, which refers to new rubles].... But if the diary was fabricated well after the events described, what was the purpose of this effort?"

The implications of Epstein's comments in New York (3/6/78, p. 56) were comparable: "Oswald's Russian diary was a fake.... I discovered independently [of the handwriting examination] that the diary was full of anachronisms. One of Oswald's 1959 entries mentioned an official who was not in office until 1961."

When I read this in New York, I was impressed; Epstein had made it look as if he had discovered a subtle flaw in the (allegedly) KGB-dictated legendary diary. I was particularly ready to be impressed if the official in question was a Russian, which would have meant that the error might not have been evident to someone who didn't have access to the CIA's full set of traces.

A normal reading of the passage in Legend would be that Oswald had indicated that McVickar had replaced Snyder by the date of the entry, 10/31/59. Here is the text of the entry itself (from CE 24 [16H96] - and here there is no excuse for Epstein's failure to provide a citation):

"... She rises and enters the office of Richard Snyder American Head Consular in Moscow at that time. He invites me to sit down.... His assistant [sic] (now Head Consular) McVickers looks up from his work...." [My emphasis]

So, it is quite obvious that Oswald is writing after the fact; here he is making no attempt to conceal it. Specifically, if this diary had been dictated by the KGB and made to look contemporary, this rather obvious indication that it was being written later would certainly have been removed.

Epstein may in fact have noticed something that escaped the attention of the Warren Commission. I don't recall whether they thought the diary was written later. (That would be neither surprising nor suspicious. There are various indications that Oswald had some literary pretensions after his return to the U.S.)

I find it hard to excuse Epstein's handling of this point. Perhaps one of his researchers observed that the diary had been written later, and Epstein then incorporated that result, and an imprecise description of the diary entry itself, without checking it out. But that's not much of an excuse, since this is a rather important point: not only does the evidence not support Epstein's implied claim that he had discovered a flaw in Oswald's legend, it suggests that the diary was so obviously of later origin that it could not have been an attempt to provide documentary support for the legend. (Of course, the fact remains that the diary is incomplete, and it may well not be an honest document; but the idea that it was prepared under KGB direction - an idea spelled out by Epstein for Oswald's shipboard notes, p. 154 - now seems pretty far-fetched.)

I guess Oswald can be faulted for failing to adhere strictly to the usual connotations of the word "diary."* But Oswald had a rough childhood and didn't have the educational advantages of Edward Jay Epstein, which I think would have allowed Epstein to learn the meaning of "anachronism."

(*: although I don't recall that Oswald ever claimed the diary was written contemporaneously.)

P.S.: Didn't the Commission, the CIA, or NSA do standard handwriting and ink tests on the diary? Does anyone recall the results?

[More non-sequential notes:]

The 44 questions for Nosenko: without going back to reread the book, my impression is that Epstein treats these questions in a very odd way. He brings them up to score a point against Hoover for refusing to let them be asked while Nosenko was under FBI control, and reprints them in an appendix, with little or nothing in between. This raises all sorts of questions. (See questions 4-7 in my appendix.) When did Hoover's authority to forbid certain questioning cease? Didn't the CIA get control over Nosenko fairly soon? (In fact, my recollection of the FBI interview reports is that Hoover pointed out to the WC that Nosenko was in CIA custody.) I guess the hypothesis in the back of my mind is that if the asking of these questions was delayed, other than for a few days by Hoover, it might have been delayed because non-Angleton people inside the CIA had reasons (maybe good ones) for not asking them.

Interception of Oswald's mail: see p. 5 of these notes. The citations for two interceptions (one letter, one return address) are given on p. 5 of the Hoch-Stetler review, with a brief discussion. (Pages 103, 169.) As noted there, Epstein said in New York (2/27, p. 30) that the letter mentioning Powers was also intercepted. If this is accurate - and we certainly can't trust Epstein - then Angleton's apparent non-reaction (or at least his apparent failure to notify the FBI and the rest of the CIA) is particularly striking.

Some interesting information from Brad Sparks:

Until 1958 [sic], the CIA's foreign intelligence operations were to some degree under the Defense Department. [I'll try to get exact sources on this.] Thus, it makes more sense than I had thought that in 1959 ONI might be putting its own defectors in Russia. If ONI were proceeding without proper authorization, that might explain certain things. (It would certainly explain their failure to tell the FBI all about Oswald better than Epstein's suggesting, that they were trying to keep information from the Soviets!) Of course, the idea that LHO was ONI should be pursued regardless of the facts about that alleged 1958 change in procedures, but the facts are worth checking.

Marchetti is given as a source on the handling of Nosenko (in the late 1960's, I think). This suggests that he knew what Angleton was thinking about, which makes his novel, The Rope Dancer, more "à clef" than one might have thought. (I am told that this novel deals with an Angleton-type who is after a DCI-type mole.)

It might be worth our while to talk with Barron, in the Digest's D.C. office. (Cockburn says he's upset by Epstein - not surprisingly.) There is surprisingly little overlap between the people on Barron's project, and on Epstein's.

It's rather striking that Epstein seems to overplay the U.S. ties of two people: Snyder and Priscilla Johnson. He reports that Snyder joined the CIA in 1949 (p. 94), served in Tokyo under cover, and was now "acting" as senior Consular officer in Moscow. Epstein omits the reference (a puzzling one, to be sure) to the fact that Snyder "apparently" resigned from the CIA when he went over to HICOG [High Command, Germany?] in 1950. [CIA #609-786] Johnson's objections to being called a U.S. government employee at the time she met Oswald are well known; Epstein refers to her "previous tour" at the Moscow Embassy as if she was on another tour in 1959, and describes the infamous (and, probably, just plain inaccurate FBI report indicating she was a State employee) as a "State Department document." (Page 99) On the other hand, the CIA ties of Alexis Davison are simply a Russian allegation in a footnote (p. 308, note 17), and nothing is said about the interesting ties of Spas T. Raikin. Most peculiar.

Incidentally, I just found the 44 questions for Nosenko - CIA #583-814.

CD 931 - re LHO's access to the U-2 - might be important. Apparently replying to an allegation that LHO had physical access to the U-2, Helms made a strong denial, but said nothing, really, about access to such things as altitude information.

Is James Jesus Angleton the CIA's answer to Mae Brussell?

Has anyone made a list of the people Epstein interviewed who are not mentioned in the book (at least, in the index)? E.g., Edward Brand, p. 354.

(More to come)