

turned him down. This is all printed in the Commission evidence. "I want to tell the truth," Ruby said at one point. "and I can't tell it here. . . . Gentlemen, unless you get me to Washington, you can't get a fair shake out of me." He added: "My life is in danger here." When Congressman Ford asked, somewhat redundantly, if there were things he would reveal in Washington that he wouldn't reveal in Dallas, Ruby told him that there were. And as the hearing closed, he made one last desperate plea to Chief Justice Warren to get him out of Dallas. "You are the only one who can save me," he told Warren. "But by delaying minutes, you lose the chance." Ruby said he was anxious to tell the truth about "why my act was committed, but it can't be said here." At that point Earl Warren, instead of reassuring Ruby and trying to find out what he knew, actually told him that he had good reason to fear for his safety if he talked too much. These are Warren's exact words, from the Commission records: "I think I might have some reluctance if I was in your position, yes; I think I would. I think I would figure it out very carefully as to whether it would endanger me or not." Here is the Chief Justice of the United States questioning the one surviving principal, and in effect warning him not to tell everything he knows. It certainly was, to put it as innocently as possible, an incurious approach.

PLAYBOY: Couldn't Ruby have blurted out whatever he knew to Warren, and on the strength of that demanded some kind of political asylum? Didn't he actually jeopardize himself more by making only cryptic remarks that might be disregarded?

LANE: I think he handled things quite well from the standpoint of his own interest. If he was involved in a plot and he told the whole story, his statement would be tantamount to a confession of murder with malice. After a new trial, his "asylum" would be a cemetery. Ruby's cryptic remarks may have been intended as a reminder that he still might talk if arrangements for his release were not fulfilled. All of this, of course, is based on the presumption that Ruby may have been part of a conspiracy to kill Oswald.

PLAYBOY: Why didn't the Commission take Ruby to Washington?

LANE: The Chief Justice said that a trip with Ruby would attract "public attention" and require the presence on the plane of additional security guards. When Ruby continued to make the request, Warren snapped: "No, it could not be done. It could not be done. There are a good many things involved in that, Mr. Ruby." So Ruby never got to Washington. That was the only interview the Commissioners ever had with him, and he was never allowed to reveal whatever

it was he felt he could not reveal in the Dallas jail.

PLAYBOY: Well, what information did come out of the Dallas hearing?

LANE: Ruby testified for about three hours, but he was asked very few questions, and most of his statements were volunteered. The Commission's most fantastic omission was that Ruby was never even asked whether or not he received help in entering the basement of Dallas police headquarters. Ruby stated that when he shot Oswald "there was no malice in me." The Commission had already concluded that Ruby killed Oswald in a fit of frenzy stemming from his love of Kennedy and his hatred of Oswald. So, of course, they also failed to ask the logical and vital question: If Ruby didn't hate Oswald, why did he kill him? It goes like this right down the line. At one point Ruby disclosed that 36 hours before his "unpremeditated" murder of Oswald, a Dallas police officer had made a veiled suggestion to him that Oswald should be killed. As he testified to this effect, Joe Tonahill, his lawyer, passed a note to the Commission members reading: "This is the thing that started Jack in the shooting." In other words, Ruby's own lawyer intimates that a Dallas policeman motivated Ruby to murder Oswald. Yet Ruby was not asked a single question by the Commission on this point.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe the Commission was only going through the motions when they interviewed Ruby, and really didn't want to learn the facts?

LANE: I don't know why the Commission behaved as it did. Maybe Ruby was wrong in thinking his life was in danger in Dallas. Maybe he could have testified freely there without fear of personal injury. On the other hand, if he did have police assistance in shooting Oswald, he obviously might be reluctant to talk about it in the Dallas jail. The thing to remember is that when the Commission questioned Ruby, President Kennedy, Officer Tippit and Lee Oswald were all dead; Ruby was the sole known surviving protagonist of the events that began on November 22. Even if his fears were irrational, the Commission had an obligation—to the truth and to the American people—to do everything possible to allay Ruby's fears and find out all he knew. The Commission never did that. And that's why the most revealing question of that entire day was posed by Jack Ruby to Earl Warren. He said to the Chief Justice of the United States: "Maybe certain people don't want to know the truth that may come out of me. Is that plausible?"

PLAYBOY: If Ruby's motives were uncertain, what about Oswald's? Has it been determined if Oswald ever expressed personal or political hostility toward either

President Kennedy or Governor Connally?

LANE: There has been no allegation that Oswald did. On the contrary, Marina Oswald testified her husband thought *highly* of President Kennedy, particularly of the job he was doing on behalf of civil rights. Oswald expressed similar pro-Kennedy sentiments to other people whose testimony is on the record. Marina Oswald also said that while they were living in the Soviet Union, Oswald read that Connally was running for governor of Texas, and he told her if he had been living in Texas at the time he would have voted for him.

PLAYBOY: Would you discuss the circumstances of Oswald's stay in the Soviet Union?

LANE: Winston Churchill once referred to Russia as a mystery wrapped in an enigma, and Oswald's stay there falls into that category. He lived there two years, attempted to give up his American citizenship, and expressed violent anti-American and pro-Communist opinions. Yet in his private diaries for the same period he consistently expresses bitter anti-Soviet sentiment. On his return to the States, Oswald dictated the beginning of a book on Soviet life based on these notes, and it, too, was anti-Soviet. His mother, Marguerite Oswald, has also repeatedly stated in public that her son was a CIA agent; but I've been unable to find any independent verification for that charge. After his return to the States, Oswald maintained his leftist public image, but there are some strange contradictions here, too: He was ostensibly pro-Castro, but he also tried privately to ingratiate himself with an anti-Castro Cuban exile group. Whether he was a rightist passing for a leftist, or a leftist passing as a rightist, or an FBI or CIA agent passing for both, or possibly just plain confused, I honestly haven't been able to figure out. I'm inclined to believe he was a sincere leftist.

PLAYBOY: If both Ruby and Oswald were linked in some way with Cuban exile groups, do you believe they were associated in any other ways?

LANE: I've heard many stories to this effect, but no one has yet presented convincing proof that the two men knew each other.

PLAYBOY: You mentioned that while he was in the Soviet Union, Oswald tried to renounce his American citizenship. In September 1963, he applied for a passport in New Orleans, and his application was granted. But passport regulations require the applicant to swear he has never "sought or claimed the benefits of the nationality of any foreign state." Why was Oswald granted a passport?

LANE: I don't know. His application was wired—not mailed, as is the usual procedure—to Washington, and clearance came through within 24 hours, which