

photograph. It had the white and black numbers. . . . There was no hole in the original when they showed it to me. . . ." The Commission tried to get her off the subject, but she appeared fascinated by the altered photograph. "Why does the Commission not ask me about this?" she persisted. Finally the Commission lawyer said, "Off the record, please," and the subject was never referred to again. Wesley Liebeler, the junior attorney for the Commission who conducted the "off-the-record" discussion, recently said at a public meeting that he doesn't remember what was said during that off-the-record conference. And this photograph is the one piece of physical evidence used to show that Oswald shot at General Walker.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you know why or how the photo showing the license plate was mutilated after the photo came into the Commission's hands?

**LANE:** No. I don't. The Commission permitted a relatively inexperienced junior lawyer—Wesley Liebeler again—to handle this aspect of the investigation. The photograph raises the very real possibility that the Warren Commission tampered with evidence. Why? Well, if the license plate was dated either of the two years that Oswald spent in the Soviet Union, that would be proof that he didn't take the picture. But now you have me speculating. As I said earlier, I don't know.

**PLAYBOY:** Wasn't it proved conclusively that the photo was taken with Oswald's camera?

**LANE:** The FBI said so.

**PLAYBOY:** Why would Marina Oswald lie in an effort to incriminate her dead husband?

**LANE:** Marina Oswald's testimony indicates only one thing—that she was a frightened woman, a Soviet citizen in an alien and menacing country, unable to speak English, without any means to support herself and her children, thinking she was subject to deportation at any time. Marina Oswald is the type of witness every unscrupulous prosecutor dreams of, because she's totally vulnerable to pressure. Remember, she was held incommunicado for months by the Federal authorities, and when she emerged, she disavowed all her original statements protesting her husband's innocence and wholeheartedly supported the Warren Commission's conclusions.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you charging that agents of the United States Government intimidated a witness and persuaded her to change her testimony?

**LANE:** It seems very likely. Take a look at Marina's own testimony before the Commission. She testified that FBI agents "told me that if I wanted to live in this country, I would have to cooperate." Marina gave the Commission the names of the FBI agents who said this to her, but the matter was never followed up;

the Commission evidently wasn't interested in a possible effort by the FBI to tamper with a major witness. I don't know what the FBI meant by "cooperate." Perhaps nothing. But Marina also said an immigration official came from New York to see her before she was questioned by the FBI and "said that it would be better for me if I were to help them." She was obviously upset by her encounters with the FBI, and plaintively told Earl Warren, who throughout the hearings adopted the role of father figure toward her: "I think that the FBI agents knew I was afraid that after everything that had happened I could not remain to live in this country, and they somewhat exploited that for their own purposes, in a very polite form, so that you could not say anything after that. They cannot be accused of anything. They approached it in a very clever, contrived way." The Chief Justice quickly changed the subject. So if you're asking me if Marina Oswald was pressured by the Government to tailor her testimony to the official version, I'll say it certainly seems so. Marina was almost never subjected to what might be called cross-examination. The Commission would not permit it. It was this attitude, when Marina was appearing before the seven-man Commission, that prompted one participant to refer to the vignette as "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."

**PLAYBOY:** What proof do you have for the charge in your book that the famous *Life* cover photograph of Oswald holding the alleged murder weapon may have been forged?

**LANE:** This photograph was the single document most responsible for persuading Americans that Oswald was involved in the assassination. It shows him standing on a lawn holding the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle in one hand and two Communist newspapers in the other, with a holstered pistol strapped to his waist. How pat can you get? Many copies of this picture originally and mysteriously materialized on the day of the assassination—on a desk in the Dallas police headquarters; one cannot be certain of their origin.

**PLAYBOY:** The Warren Report seems certain. On page 592, it states that the photo "of Lee Harvey Oswald holding a rifle [was] found among Oswald's possessions in Mrs. Ruth Paine's garage at 2515 West Fifth Street, Irving, Texas."

**LANE:** That's what the Dallas police said, but questions about the authenticity of the picture raise doubts about its origin as well. Many newspapers ran the picture—and *Life*, on February 21, 1964, carried it on its cover with the caption: "Lee Oswald, with the weapons he used to kill President Kennedy and Officer Tippitt." The publication of that photograph raised questions in photographic circles around the world, and a number

of photographic experts charged it was fraudulent.

**PLAYBOY:** On what grounds?

**LANE:** First of all, some of the pictures reproduced in the press show a telescopic sight on the rifle, while in others there is no telescopic sight. Subsequently, responsible publications such as *Newsweek* and *The New York Times* admitted to the Warren Commission that their art departments had retouched the photo. But even more serious is the evidence that the *entire* picture was faked. As published on the cover of *Life*, the shadow from Oswald's nose falls directly down to the middle of his mouth, whereas the shadow from his body falls at about a 45-degree angle to his rear and to his right. From this, photographic experts immediately concluded that either Oswald's head had been superimposed on the picture or that the picture had been taken on a planet enjoying two suns. I repeated this observation to the Commission and they decided to test the photo's authenticity. Evidently, in order to prove that the shadows in the picture could be authentically duplicated, the FBI had one of its agents assume a similar position and took a photograph of him, which was published in the Report. Sure enough, the body shadow in the FBI picture falls at the same angle as the body shadow in the *Life* picture. But there's just one small problem: In the photograph published by the Warren Commission, the man's head had been removed! The FBI said they did this because nothing about the head was "pertinent"—while it was obviously the only pertinent factor involved, since the question was whether or not the nose and body shadows matched. But the Warren Commission showed a photo with the head deleted as proof that the *Life* photograph was accurate. Thus we come full circle. An openly doctored photograph was offered to prove that another was authentic.

**PLAYBOY:** So you believe the photograph was forged as part of a plot to incriminate Oswald?

**LANE:** *Oswald* believed that. In the Commission's 26 volumes of evidence, you'll discover that when Oswald was confronted with the photo in the Dallas jail, he charged that "The Dallas police have superimposed my head on that body, because that is a picture of my head, but not of my body." Oswald attested that he'd worked for a photographer and knew something about photography, and therefore knew the photo was a forgery. He said he would prove it at his trial. There never was a trial, of course. Obviously, I'm not charging that *Life* or any other publication superimposed the head. They evidently accepted the photo in good faith, though rather uncritically. **PLAYBOY:** When did Oswald make that