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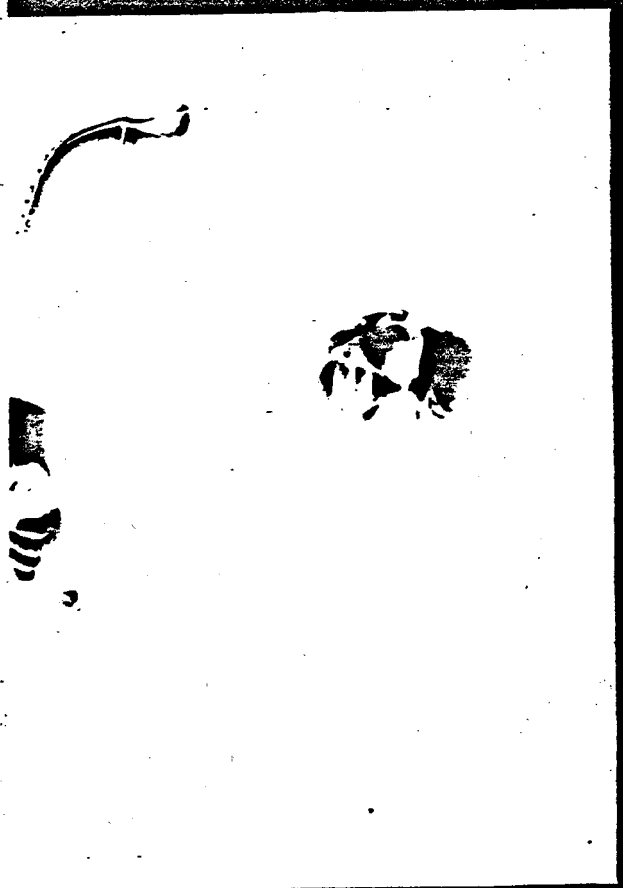
To Be Returned Yes   
No

Description: Copy of article in  
May Issue of Esquire  
Magazine titled  
"Lee Oswald's letters to  
his mother"

Equipe

# Lee Oswald's Letters To His Mother

(with footnotes by Mrs. Oswald)



Lee went to Russia in November of 1959. He was in Russia twenty months before I had the first letter from him.

I was in constant touch with the State Department with no result, so I made a personal trip to Washington, D.C., in January, 1961, and approximately in March I received an answer from the State Department informing me of my son's whereabouts. He was in Almaty, Russia, where he was working in a radio factory. When he first went to Russia it was in the paper that he was in the Metropolitan Hotel in Moscow, and then for twenty months I didn't know whether Lee was alive or dead.

Lee visited the Marines at age seventeen, on his birthday. Three years after he got out of the Marines and three days after that went to Russia. Lee wrote continuously while in the Marines, and they stayed with me for three days when coming out of the Marines, and there's much speculation about the three days because he did leave a mother who was partially ill. I had had an apartment, but Lee and I discussed this immediately upon his return. I was desolate and matter of fact, Lee got a queered discharging because of this accident, but he was only out of the Marines three weeks before his time would have been up. I started through the Red Cross at Lee's insistence, to see if he could help me in July. But it was September before he was released, and I have always said those three months of separation meant either that I could have been well and not needed my son, or that I could have been dead and not needed him, also. But someday I hope to do something about this, because I am sure there are very many other workers who are ill and need their jobs, and I would not like to see them immediately and not be

through the Government red tape for three months before they are sent home to help their mother out. However the case may be. So, after the three days—Lee said, "Mother, I have no background of work, and if I stay here the only salary I can demand would be \$30 to \$35 a week. Now we're talking about Texas, and not the Eastern states, because the salaries there are very, very low and actually that is the standard salary. And he said, "You're broke, so we would both be in the situation that you're in, so I've made up my mind that I'm going to work on a ship in the import and export business, where I can demand some money and I'll be able to help you."

I agreed with Lee because this is the way you help seventeen-, eighteen-, nineteen-year-olds, and I said, "It's a wonderful idea; but why don't you wait? Mother will settle her claim. It was not a suit, it was a compensation claim. I would be entitled to sixty percent of my salary, and the claim would have to be settled. In the meantime, probably I could baby-sit, and together we could manage. He said, "No, my mother's made up. We'll both be as bad off as you are now if I try to find work here, so I want to work on a ship." This was good thinking, and he was right, because a \$35-to-\$40-a-week job would not take care of a mother and a boy. So I accepted the fact that he has a right to the own mind. And so he left, and one week later I received a letter from Lee from New Orleans stating that he had passage on a ship to Europe, and he didn't expect me to understand, but to please try and understand—"This is something I must do," and so on, so then about a week later I picked up the paper and knew that he was in Russia.

Prepared by Doreen Mays

ESQUIRE MAY 7

The First Letter

Competition No. 187

Dear Mrs. ...  
I received your kind letter  
of the 15th and was glad  
to hear from you. I am  
well and hope these few  
lines will find you the same.  
I have not much news to  
write at present. I am  
still in the hospital and  
am getting on well. I  
will write again when I  
am home.

The Second Letter

Competition No. 188

Dear Mrs. ...  
I received your kind letter  
of the 20th and was glad  
to hear from you. I am  
well and hope these few  
lines will find you the same.  
I have not much news to  
write at present. I am  
still in the hospital and  
am getting on well. I  
will write again when I  
am home.

The Fourth Letter

Competition No. 189

24.2.187

24.2.187

24.2.187

I have just received your letter of July 18, 1961. At this time, then I decided to devote my life to humanity, and I became a practical nurse, and I did "live-in," which means living on the place twenty-four hours a day on duty. So I was in Crowell, Texas, on a case on my very first contact with Lee. This was an elderly woman who had a stroke. This was a ranch out of Crowell, Texas.

Letter received July 18, 1961. At this time, then I decided to devote my life to humanity, and I became a practical nurse, and I did "live-in," which means living on the place twenty-four hours a day on duty. So I was in Crowell, Texas, on a case on my very first contact with Lee. This was an elderly woman who had a stroke. This was a ranch out of Crowell, Texas.

The first letter is lost. He mentions in it that he married a Russian girl; that Marina is beautiful, and he sent the wedding picture and also asks for some razor blades and a can of shaving cream, and some literature. "I very much miss literature." In my answer to the first letter I said Marina is beautiful. In my answer to the second letter received August 10, 1961, they had just married, and

The first letter is lost. He mentions in it that he married a Russian girl; that Marina is beautiful, and he sent the wedding picture and also asks for some razor blades and a can of shaving cream, and some literature. "I very much miss literature." In my answer to the first letter I said Marina is beautiful. In my answer to the second letter received August 10, 1961, they had just married, and

SQUIRE, MAY

The Third Letter

Completion No. 183

Oct 2, 1911

Dear Mother,  
 I received your packet of letters  
 yesterday, and I was glad to hear from  
 you. I hope you are feeling well  
 and are enjoying your stay in  
 the country. I am feeling better  
 now than I was when I was  
 out with you. I am glad to hear  
 you are all getting ready for  
 the winter. I hope you will have  
 a very successful season.  
 I am glad to hear you are  
 all getting ready for the  
 winter. I hope you will have  
 a very successful season.  
 I am glad to hear you are  
 all getting ready for the  
 winter. I hope you will have  
 a very successful season.

"God Bless" and I hope to  
 see you in the winter. I am  
 glad to hear you are all  
 getting ready for the winter.  
 I hope you will have a very  
 successful season. I am glad  
 to hear you are all getting  
 ready for the winter. I hope  
 you will have a very successful  
 season. I am glad to hear  
 you are all getting ready for  
 the winter. I hope you will  
 have a very successful season.

The Fifth Letter

Completion No. 184

Nov 1, 1911

I knew that she was a foreign girl—a Russian girl—so I thought probably she would like a little trinket, so I sent her a bracelet and a necklace—sort of a wedding gift—I mean it was something that was new, very unusual. Matter of fact, I'd had the bracelet for about twenty-five years; it was my own bracelet; that I sent. And then I sent her the necklace, and a little pair of earrings.

P.S. Did you receive my last note and was it missing some things I sent in with it? I'd like to know if you got it. I'd like to know if you got it. I'd like to know if you got it. I'd like to know if you got it.

4. Robert is Lee's brother. Lee has a half-brother that's older. Lee has two brothers, John and Robert, and Robert lived in Fort Worth, Texas.

A. I learned through a letter that he was coming home. I also learned through the very first letter from the State Department giving me Lee's address that Lee had contacted the Embassy in

The Fifth Letter (Continued)

I regret that you do not know  
 how I feel about the matter. I  
 am sure you will understand  
 and I hope you will be able  
 to give me a good answer.  
 I am sure you will be able  
 to give me a good answer.  
 I am sure you will be able  
 to give me a good answer.  
 I am sure you will be able  
 to give me a good answer.

The Sixth Letter

January 31, 1911

The Sixth Letter

Completion No.

Jan 21

Dear Mr. [Name],  
 I am very sorry to hear that  
 you are not well. I hope you  
 will get better soon. I am  
 sure you will be able to  
 give me a good answer.  
 I am sure you will be able  
 to give me a good answer.  
 I am sure you will be able  
 to give me a good answer.  
 I am sure you will be able  
 to give me a good answer.

The Seventh Letter

Completion No. 1911

January 21



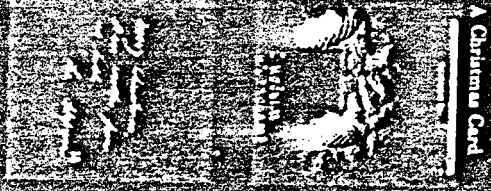
from previous  
 to the means of this  
 of investigation from 1960  
 in the hope of reporting on the  
 my wife (she is a student  
 on the staff of the  
 the U.S. for information was  
 made in 1960 as you may  
 ing a record (see my  
 for action) and the  
 at all well, writing from the  
 in writing  
 (Personal information and  
 which may be included in the  
 6-11-61 and was by  
 and - Bureau  
 Head of the  
 10-11-61

18  
 the U.S. in the  
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 the U.S.  
 the U.S.

Moscow stating that he wished to return to the United States. This  
 is my first contact with Lee, through the State Department, inform-  
 ing me of Lee's address and of his desire to return to the United  
 States and then after my correspondence with Lee direct mailing  
 provisions for coming home.  
 of latter received October 10, 1961. Then I was on a case in

Vernon, Texas. And this will explain why I have so many addresses  
 because I am a live-in nurse and I get my cases by word of mouth  
 I'm on private duty, and I get my cases by word of mouth  
 John, Lee's brother, is in the service of our country—he's in  
 the Air Force, and has been since age seventeen. He's now been in  
 fourteen years, this is his career. He moves around a lot.

20  
 Figure 14



The Seventh Letter

From the 18th of 1897 Dec. 18, 1897

Dear Mother,

I received your kind letter and was glad to hear from you and to hear how you were getting on. I am well and hope these few lines will find you all the same. I have not much news to write at present. I am still in the same place and doing the same work. I have not seen any of the folks here since I came. I have not seen any of the folks here since I came. I have not seen any of the folks here since I came.

The Tenth Letter

From the 18th of 1897 Dec. 18, 1897

The Eleventh Letter

From the 18th of 1897 Dec. 18, 1897

My dear Mother,

I received your kind letter and was glad to hear from you and to hear how you were getting on. I am well and hope these few lines will find you all the same. I have not much news to write at present. I am still in the same place and doing the same work. I have not seen any of the folks here since I came. I have not seen any of the folks here since I came. I have not seen any of the folks here since I came.



The English Letter

Handwritten text in English script, appearing to be a letter or document fragment.

The French Letter

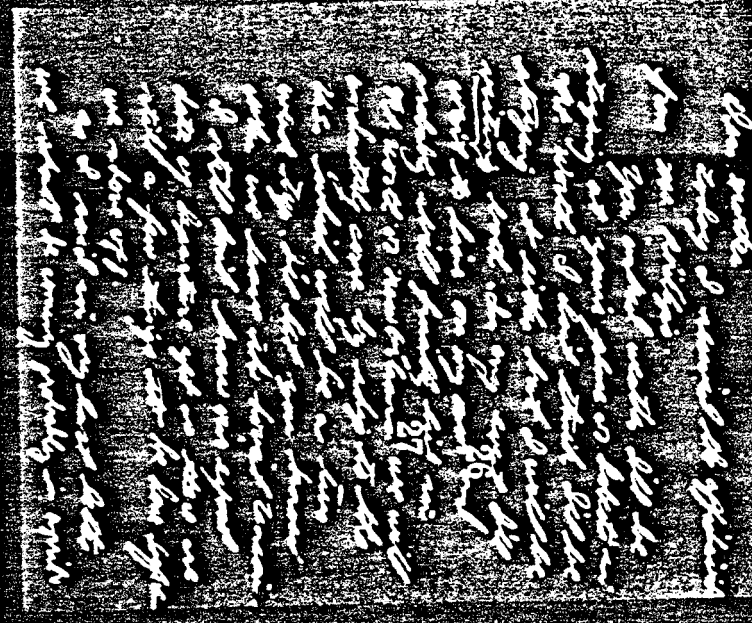
Handwritten text in French script, including a date '246 15 1712' and a signature 'P. de la Roche'.

The German Letter (Common)

Handwritten text in German script.

The Spanish Letter

Handwritten text in Spanish script.



would want to become a Soviet citizen, because he was working there, and had a wife who was a Russian girl, so I asked him if he had any idea of becoming a Soviet citizen.  
 11. This to me is very important. This is the first time these letters are being released to the public and I have stated over and over that I have actual documents in hand and will do without them.

of the awful statements that have been said against this boy. He's not perfect, but he has some very fine qualities. I think so, and the letters do show so. And so it states in the letter that Lee had brought literature and books for Maria for her to learn English, but she didn't want to, because of her housework and work, and he's gone along with that. However, I also know that Lee and

of words to you I mean

As you know I'm writing you because  
I'm in a bit of a hurry and I  
don't have time to write you  
as much as I would like to. I  
hope you are well and happy  
and that everything is going  
well for you. I'll be in touch  
again soon. Love, [Name]

September 11, 1945  
Dear [Name]

The Fifteenth Letter

Dear [Name],  
I'm writing you because I  
don't have time to write you  
as much as I would like to. I  
hope you are well and happy  
and that everything is going  
well for you. I'll be in touch  
again soon. Love, [Name]



Photograph by [Name]

The Fifteenth Letter

*[Faint, mostly illegible handwriting, possibly a letter or note.]*

*[Faint, mostly illegible handwriting, possibly a letter or note.]*

Marina returned from Russia to Fort Worth, that Marina immediately started to take English lessons, also through a university, and Marina speaks broken English quite well. And so this will show you what the news media have done with my life and Lee's. This is actual proof. One particular story that they have exploited is that Lee treated her mean, and would not allow her

to learn English, but we have it in black and white, and I state now that also in America that she was learning English. Lee wrote and spoke Russian very fluently. In fact Lee has the equivalent of one year of college education in Russian, and I have this in black and white, in the form of an application he made to the Albert Schweitzer School in Switzerland. (Continued on page 75)

ESQUIRE. MAY

12 Letter received November 18, 1961. I sent the one picture he had taken in New Orleans on Mother's Day 1965. I sent a few baby pictures of Lee—just regular Kodak pictures.

13 Letter received December 12, 1961. The Christmas card was Merry Christmas, and what I find interesting, it has a pine cone and a clock with the number on, 12 o'clock. But the back of the Christmas card is blank, and this is what interests me most. This is a Russian Christmas card. There are no sentiments—you write your own words. All their Christmas cards are blank, which is wonderful—of course we do not have time to write our own words, particularly. I would say people that have many, many acquaintances—in the hundreds—they don't even sign their name! But to me this is ideal, because you have to sit down and write your own sentiments for your folks, and Lee did mention "Merry Christmas, Dear Mother—Lee, and Marina signed her name in Russian. So, see the Russian people are human beings after all, they do have many fine points to their way of life, just as we have to ours, but I believe that either today or tomorrow if we can recognize their fine points along with our fine points, along with their faults and our faults, and if we can nourish them then we will have peace.

14 Letter received December 26, 1961. At this time I'm not having contact with any family at all. Matter of fact I've never been close to the family from the time they left home. We, as a family, were a close family, but when the boys married, you have to understand that I'm a widow making my own living, and I am working twenty-four hours a day, and moving from place to place, and they have their own life, so we now have drifted to a certain extent, but I think most families do drift after the boys marry and leave home. And I have three boys, and boys are a little different than I believe a daughter would be. And I'm a very independent person, and make my own living, and so it's a full-time job for a woman, my age to be out in the business world and take care of herself. So lately I don't have time for my family. I may be very hurried makes away.

15 I always did whatever the children asked me to do, because I knew I was very important. I also wrote letters. Lee figured I was very expensive for me to mail letters, and I wrote quite frequently. And also Marina enjoyed the pictures on the post-cards. And he asked me to also write in the letters, and also about

also went to a very fine citizen who had a citizen award for helping people and I was turned down by him. The attitude was that if he went over to Russia to defect let him stay. Now this is a very fine, fine citizen with this attitude. And so I'm trying to get help for the boy and presenting my case that he is a young boy, he's an American citizen. He has been married and he has all documentation with him. The only thing lacking to bring him back to his native land would be money. And I am unable to get anyone to help in this endeavor. I thought if I would give the story to the newspaper that he wanted to come home, that his visa and everything were there, but it was the money, lacking, then maybe some good American would finance his way home because I was not having any luck talking to the ones individually to help him to come home. He said he didn't want me to give the story to the newspaper, he'll tell me that. He didn't want to complicate his coming home any more than was necessary. I think that then he was negotiating with the Embassy about money to come on a loan.

20 Letter received February 23, 1962. I'm having trouble getting the affidavit of support out, though but he will have to have someone sponsor this and I thought that the people I was working for knew my problem and that they should offer and when they didn't I went to other people who had turned me down and then when I was talking about being turned down then my employer offered to help.

21. I had written him and said now I know you always know what you're doing. You have a Russian wife, you have a job. You have been in Russia for the last two years. You have sent me many, many fine gifts and you write all the time, and all of this takes money and many, many photographs. Are you sure that this is what you want to do because you are a known defector and you may not be accepted and I have reason to say this because I had already explained how hard it was to get someone to help him to come home, how hard it was to even get an affidavit of support which was just a technically, and so I'm now realizing that this boy is going to have it very hard here in the United States and so I said to him are you sure that this is what you want to do? And you exploited in the paper, very very much so, as a defector and that is why he is asking me to send the clippings of the papers so he would see



...vermore, they're much cheaper, matter of fact, I believe he mentions this in a letter. And so he's always thinking, "Mother, don't spend everything you earn on us. We want to hear from you, but do it the easiest way." The same way with the packages; he keeps saying, "Don't send heavy packages." He'd worried about the weight postage that I pay. The expense, and he didn't want me to spend all of my money on things for them.

16 [Letter received January 29, 1962; the date on the letter is the same, undoubtedly an error on his part]. I got the affidavit for him. I wrote first to the naturalization and immigration office. I think they're in Vernon, Texas, on a case, or probably Crowell. These sections are all together—probably fifty or seventy-five miles away, bringing me back to Fort Worth all the time. The original place, Crowell, Texas, was two hundred miles away, and then I worked my way back to Fort Worth on cases. So Wichita Falls was the closest place that I could get this information, because I'm in very small towns, Crowell, Vernon, and those towns are very small places. So Wichita Falls was the main place and I would and they sent me a form to fill out. Of course, then I would have to have a sponsor for the affidavit of support—an American sponsor, and I was working for a man at this particular time, taking care of his mother, who had had a stroke, and he offered to be the sponsor.

17 [Letter received January 29, 1962]. I don't believe there are any missing letters. What I think he's saying is that the letter following this would have been the one about the affidavit, and he wants to make sure that I receive the letter.

18. Lee needed help now. He's ready to come home. All documents are secured for his wife and himself but he doesn't have the money to come home so he asks me to contact the Red Cross and to contact several organizations who help people in these particular cases to come back.

19. Letter received early in February, 1962. I asked Lee if I should give his story to the newspaper because I am unable to get help. I had gone to several very prominent citizens and explained that this boy was in Russia and an American citizen who wanted to come home but for lack of money he was unable to.

22. The editorials were letters from people in the newspaper. It had nothing to do with the prior questions he asked. I sent him some books and then I had wrapped the books up with newspaper editorials which are letters from people that I had accumulated that I had thought would be interesting reading. It had nothing to do with the story of his defection. This is just extra reading and I wrapped the books up in many, many of these papers, thinking that he would enjoy the newspapers, and he wrote back and said it was quick thinking on my part. He enjoyed reading them. I sent him a book by Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, and most of the other books that I sent were books that I had bought in a used-book place where I was—*Time*, *Life*—and just any, you know, everyday books, magazines, not books actually, just magazines. It kept running up into money. The postage was very expensive and I would get these books at half price because they were used magazines, *Reader's Digest*, anything. But they were in good condition and, you know, I would say up-to-date. So it would take two months to get the material. It would cost me anywhere from \$2 to \$5 to send a package. Oh, yes, he said he received them, thank you. But I know he liked Vincent Peale's work. In fact on his application to Albert Schweitzer College the book that he said he most liked to read, Vincent Peale was one of the authors that he thinks of the most.

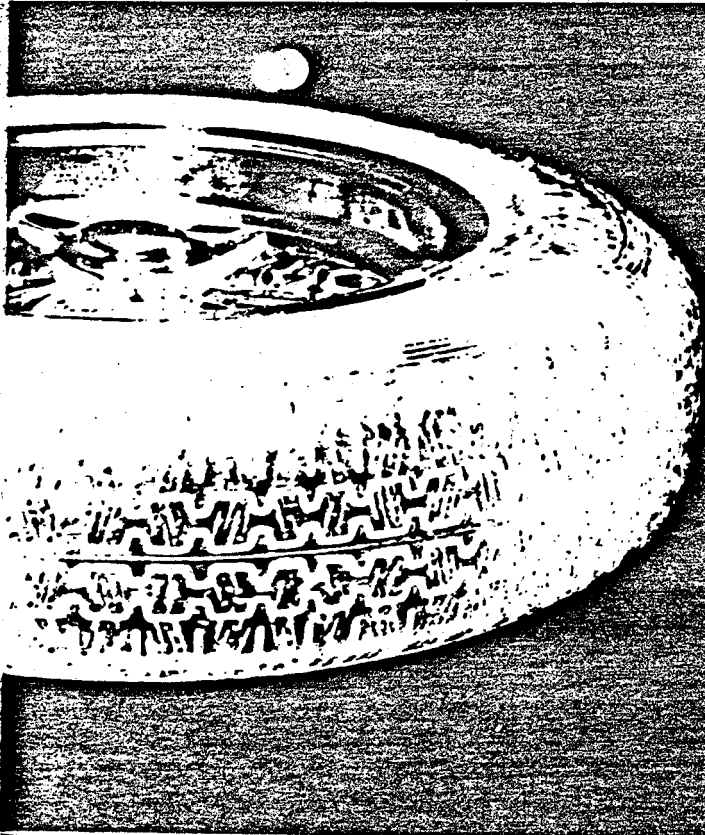
23 [Letter received March 1, 1962]. The State Department loaned him the money to come home on. Lee had asked for \$800 and the State Department loaned him, as has been publicized and made public by the State Department, \$400 and some odd dollars, I think \$469. They only brought home a few things, one radio, I might say, jewelry from Russia, clothing and some silverware and personal things.

24. I had written him and told him that I had a letter from the Marine Corps giving him an undestrable discharge. He had an honorable discharge from the Marines, serving three years, and a good-conduct medal, and the undestrable discharge was given because he had defected to Russia.

25 [Letter received March 7, 1962]. (Continued on page 169)

LEE OSWALD'S LETTERS TO HIS MOTHER

(Continued from page 75) Well, the en-  
 velle and the stationery he's an-  
 nouncing the birth of his baby, and since  
 this is the first fancy stationery I had,  
 I'm to imagine that possibly it's some-  
 thing special in Russia. I had another  
 one of them—I think it was around  
 Christmas time when another fancy one  
 came. So I have to assume that that is  
 probably the reason for it. But now he's  
 telling me about the baby's right name  
 and this might be interesting to the  
 people. In Russia even if it's a female  
 the middle name is always the name of  
 the father. So her name is June Lee  
 Oswald, and had it been a male and



he wanted to name the boy Lee, he  
 would have been named Lee Lee Os-  
 wald. They always take the middle  
 name of the father. He then found  
 out that it was June Lee Oswald.

26 [Letter received April 9, 1962].  
 He had always lived with me and I  
 was now working back in Crowell,  
 Texas, and I asked him if he planned  
 to come to Crowell and that's when  
 he answered that he wanted to live  
 on his own.

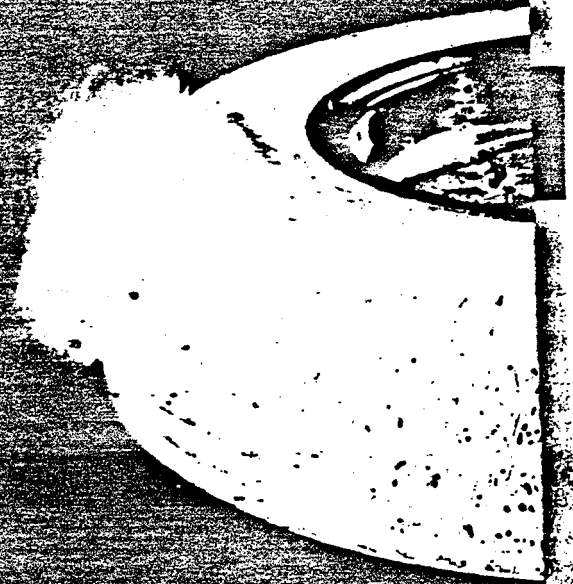
27. He was born in New Orleans,  
 Louisiana, and lived there up until  
 the age of five, when I remarried and  
 left there and part of his life was  
 spent in Fort Worth, Texas, so that  
 was the two places he knew of.

28. Those were the clipprints about  
 his defection. I couldn't send him too  
 many because I had to put them in  
 letters, but I did give him the general  
 idea.

29. I was getting a little concerned  
 because it's been almost a year now  
 that Lee is trying to come home  
 Documentation had been settled for  
 quite a while and I said I was getting  
 a little concerned and worried why  
 they weren't sending home, since he  
 had stated that money was going to  
 be financed through the State Depart-  
 ment and he said not to worry about  
 it. I mentioned to him that I was get-  
 ting a little concerned and upset and  
 worried because I wanted the baby  
 born here in America. It should have  
 been born here in America but for  
 lack of money Lee didn't come home  
 as fast as he should have. What  
 I'm trying to say is, all of the visas  
 and everything were settled but the  
 money problem is what kept him over  
 there longer. Otherwise the baby  
 would have been born here in the  
 United States. And it's an awfully  
 long trip, 10,000 miles, for a couple  
 to come with a young baby. It's a  
 very hard thing to do.  
 30 [Letter received June 6, 1962]. He

Worth, Texas, at the Potter Apart-  
 ment, and Marina, and Lee came  
 to stay with me. I bought all the food  
 and paid the first rent and then Lee  
 got a job. I took him every day for a  
 job, then he got a job and they went  
 on their own. So here I am once again  
 down to my last penny. I had been  
 this way many, many a time and it's  
 enough to say that I have a job and  
 everything works out all right. What  
 I'm trying to say is that the only  
 money I had, I paid rent and bought  
 food for these kids for one month  
 and it took me three weeks to find a  
 job. I took him every day job hunting  
 and the first pay he kept and with  
 his second pay he had enough money  
 to pay a month's rent and they went  
 on their own.

I was never concerned about hav-  
 ing a son in Russia. I made this  
 perfectly plain in 1950 at the time  
 of his so-called defection. They said  
 that he had studied communism and  
 that this is what he lived for—the  
 time when he could no longer have  
 Mary's, many statements. And I said  
 then and was criticized then very sa-  
 verely that if he had studied commu-  
 nism and if he had thought this out  
 thoroughly and if this was what he  
 wanted to do, I believe that as an  
 individual that this was his right to  
 do, whichever he thought was the  
 right thing to do, and that I would  
 respect that right and I do—with  
 everyone. And people in Russia are  
 no different than the people here. I  
 didn't know too much about Russia  
 when he did defect, but I have now  
 studied a little bit and fear that I  
 can say, sincerely, that they live and  
 breathe like we do and they think  
 and I see nothing different in Russia,  
 than we in America. I have a Russian  
 daughter-in-law who I'm very proud  
 of and would hope that the people  
 would study other people's foreign  
 ways a little so that we would have



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did ask him about Washington and I have no way of knowing if he went to Washington.

I received a postcard from Lee saying that they were leaving and this would be approximately about June 12 or 13 and later a speed letter from the State Department informing me that my son and his wife had left Moscow and would arrive in New York on June 13.

Well, the case that I'm on now is a very elderly woman and it's just she and I in the house and so I'm unable to leave my patient in order to meet my son. He's going to arrive in Dallas at the airport and Robert and his family are meeting him, but I'm unable to meet him and it's a week later before I can find someone to take care of my patient temporarily so I could go to Fort Worth, which I did for a weekend, to see Lee. Then I had to go back on my case. It was awfully crowded in Robert's house. He has two children and a wife and himself and with another couple and a child. I had then decided that I would terminate my services in Crowley, Texas and come to Fort Worth where I could help the children as much as possible, which I did. I had exactly \$175 to my name. I had explained before that I was working for \$25 a week. Out of that I had to pay gasoline for my car to go to town because we're in little country towns way on the outskirts, which was approximately \$6 a week, and then I sent all these packages to Lee and postage and my insurance, so I think I have anything left out of \$25 a week and I did manage to save \$175 in this year. So I rented a house in Fort

that I am very ignorant until Lee defected—I'm still ignorant. I don't mean to say otherwise, but I have no knowledge. I always said Russian people were peasant people and very poor and didn't have anything, and I subscribe to the USSR, which is a magazine put out by our government in Russia and we have an agreement with Russia—they put out *American* the USSR is written about Russia in English for us to read. It's a wonderful magazine and when I started to see the beautiful subway in Moscow then I realized how ignorant I was and that Russian people were normal people just like we. Their way of life is different. When we respect their way of life a little bit, as I said before, then I think we're on the road to peace.

I have never asked Lee why he went to Russia. As I said, I respected his view, I have my own ideas about why he went to Russia. Now it's evident that I'm trying to make it public. At the particular time I didn't question him about all this. This is what he wanted to do. If there was another reason why he went to Russia, I knew he wouldn't tell me. I just wouldn't ask. It wouldn't be the thing to do. Many people have asked since they knew I saw Lee in the jailhouse. If I asked him if he was guilty of killing President Kennedy, and I answered I wouldn't, insult him and ask him that question. And the reason for that was I heard him with my own ears and saw him on television say 'I didn't do it. I didn't do it,' so why should I ask him if he did such a thing? I heard him say he didn't do it so that's enough for me whether it's my son or any other man.