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FBI interview triggered angry Oswald note!

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An FBI agent's interview of Marina Oswald apparently triggered an angry response from her husband, accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

Oswald, soon after the interview, delivered a threatening letter to FBI headquarters in Dallas. It has now been revealed that the letter was destroyed shortly after the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination of President John F. Kennedy and was not revealed to the Warren Commission.

The entire sequence of events leading Oswald to that act has been described in Warren Commission testimony, official FBI reports and interviews published since Nov. 22, 1963. Here is a summary of the FBI involvement with Lee Harvey Oswald and his wife before the assassination.

FBI agent James P. Hosty took over the Oswald case March 4, 1963. It had been closed by FBI Agent John W. Fain. Fain had two routine interviews with the Russian defector in 1962 when Oswald had returned to Fort Worth.

Hosty explained to the Warren Commission investigators in 1964 how he got into the case:

"When Agent Fain retired directly from the Bureau he had closed the case. He had a case which we call a pending inactive case on Mrs. Marina Oswald. This case I did take over. It was in what we call a pending inactive status, that is, nothing was to be done for a period of six months. Then at the end of the six-month period it was then turned into a pending case and I went out and attempted to locate Mrs. Marina Oswald for the purpose of interviewing her."

Was it unusual that the focus of the bureau interest was on Marina, not her defector husband?

"It is the practice of the FBI," Hosty told the Warren Commission May 5, 1964, "to interview immigrants from behind the Iron Curtain on a selective basis, and she was so selected to be one of these persons to be interviewed."

Hosty said his work papers and reports indicated this was March 4, 1963, and that day he learned, through the Immigration and Naturalization Service, that Marina had moved from Fort Worth to an apartment on Elsbeth street in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas.

Hosty said that on March 11, 1963, he visited the Elsbeth apartment and found that the Oswalds had just been evicted "because of their alleged fighting and his alleged drinking."

The trail led to 214 Neely, where Hosty found the Oswalds three days later.

Hosty said he didn't approach the Oswalds at that time "because of the alleged marital difficulties they were having." He said "in my judgment this was not the time to interview Mrs. Oswald, but to allow a certain cooling-off period."

"So I checked Lee Oswald's file, at which time I determined that he had a contact with the New York Daily Worker." (This was noted in a letter from the New York FBI bureau to the Dallas bureau and placed in Oswald's closed file.)

At this time Hosty requested that Oswald's file be reopened — in a routine request to Washington headquarters. The request was granted and Hosty decided to wait 45 days before making another move to talk to the Oswalds.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

"The Dallas Times Herald"

Dallas, Texas

Page 18-A

Date: August 31, 1975
Edition: ★★
Author:
Editor: Kenneth P. Johnson
Title:

Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office:
 Being Investigated

NOT RECORDED

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"This was not highly urgent at the time," he said to the Commission. "We had waited a period of time and it wouldn't hurt to wait another 45 days. When I went back to check again in May, the middle of May, I found out that they had moved from their Neely street address and had left no forwarding address."

The next contact Hosty had on the case was in June 1963 when the New Orleans FBI office reported Oswald and his wife were in that city and they requested information on him.

Hosty sent a formal request that the New Orleans FBI definitely verify their presence in that city. In August the verification came, with word that Oswald was living there and was employer.

At this point, Hosty passed along the case to the responsibility of the New Orleans office, with Dallas becoming the "auxiliary" office and New Orleans the "office of origin." Along with this routine transfer of responsibility goes copies of any material in the file the new "office of origin" does not have on the individual.

Hosty had nothing else to do with the case until Oct. 3, 1963, when New Orleans wired him that the Oswalds had left New Orleans a short time before. Information included that Marina was 8 months pregnant, had left with a woman and her 2-year-old child in a station wagon with Texas license plates. Lee Harvey, the message said, had stayed behind one day and then "disappeared the next day." New Orleans asked Dallas to locate them. Since Hosty had worked the case before, he was assigned it at this time.

He told the Commission he made the usual inquiries among known friends and former neighbors and contacted Robert Oswald, Lee's brother, then in Arkansas. He said he felt the inquiry was routine with "no particular note of urgency."

Then on Oct. 25, the New Orleans office advised Hosty that through another agency they had determined that Oswald had made contact with the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City a few days earlier.

The Warren Commission asked Hosty if this increased his efforts to find Oswald. He replied: "Very much so, yes. I became curious then." He said that on Oct. 29, New Orleans advised him that they had a Dallas-area address for the Oswalds, 2515 W. 5th St., Irving.

On that same date, Hosty made a "pretext" visit to a neighbor and found out rather substantial information about Ruth and Michael Paine and their houseguest, "a Russian woman with a new baby." The neighbor, Mrs.

Dorothy Roberts, told Hosty that the Russian woman's husband visited her but did not live there.

Two days later, Oct. 31, Hosty spent considerable time interviewing people who knew the Paines and checked to see if they had any sort of police or subversive records. He found none.

Asked why he spent so much time on the Paines, he replied: "I wanted to make sure before I approached Mrs. Paine that she was not involved in any way with Lee Harvey Oswald, in any type of activities which were against the best interests of the United States."

Then came the initial interview, Nov. 1. Mrs. Paine cordially ushered him in and told him the Oswalds were staying with her. She told Hosty she didn't know the Oak Cliff address where Lee Harvey lived. She told him he had found employment at The Texas School Book Depository and together they looked up the address of that facility.

Hosty recalled that the interview lasted no more than 25 minutes, ending at about 2:30 p.m.

Near the conclusion, Marina came into the Paine living room. Said Hosty, "As Mrs. Paine had told me, she did not speak any English, so Mrs. Paine then told her in the Russian language who I was, that I was an agent with the FBI.

"I could tell from her eyes and her expression that she became quite alarmed, quite upset. I had had previous experience with people who come from Communist-controlled countries, that they get excited when they

see the police. They must think that we are like the Gestapo or something like that."

"She became quite alarmed and, like I say, I knew that she just had a baby the week before. So, I didn't want to leave her in that state, so rather than just walking out and leaving her and not saying anything to her, I told Mrs. Paine to relate to her in the Russian language that I was not there for the purpose of harming her, harassing her, and that it wasn't the job of the FBI to harm people. It was our job to protect people."

Hosty said he felt Mrs. Paine related the message to Marina properly because "she seemed to calm down a little bit and when I left she was smiling. I left her in a relaxed mood. I didn't want to leave her alarmed and upset, a woman with a new baby. It is not the thing to do. So she was apparently smiling, happy, and she shook hands with me as I left. I wanted to leave her in a good frame of mind. I then left."

Hosty said he asked no specific questions of Marina, that his only conversation toward her was the effort to soothe her. He said as he left he gave Mrs. Paine his name and telephone number.

He said Mrs. Paine seemed concerned that an FBI inquiry about Lee Harvey at his place of employment might cost him that job. He assured her he would handle that inquiry in a manner as to not get Oswald fired.

That interview was Friday afternoon and so it was not until Monday, Nov. 4, that Hosty called the Texas School Book Depository building personnel office to determine if Oswald worked there and inquire as to his address. The depository's records had the Irving address of Mrs. Paine as his address.

Hosty at this point sent an airmail communication to the New Orleans FBI office assuming control of the case and advising them of his findings thus far.

Then on Nov. 5, Hosty returned to Irving and the Paine home.

On the second visit, Hosty was met by Mrs. Paine on the front porch and they chatted for a minute or two. Hosty had Agent Gary S. Wilson with him.

Marina was inside the house and did not come outside to speak to the FBI agents.

Marina later told the Warren Commission:

But between the two visits to the Paine house by Hosty, Marina had told Oswald about the Nov. 1 session and he wrote down in his note book pertinent information about Hosty — his telephone number, name and auto license number, which Marina had supplied.

What she told Oswald about that brief encounter with Hosty may never be known, but apparently Oswald was more than a little angered. When he was pulled into Dallas Police Capt. Will Fritz's office for interrogation, Hosty was present, and Oswald made several sharp retorts to Hosty once the agent's name was mentioned.

It was the fact that Oswald had Agent Hosty's name and telephone number in his notebook that led to the widespread speculation that Oswald might have been an FBI informant.



Marina Oswald ...
... investigated by FBI

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