

MOTHER RECALLS PLEA ON OSWALD

Cites '61 Appeal to Kennedy
on Locating Son in Soviet

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FORT WORTH, Tex., Dec. 6—Mrs. Marguerite Oswald revealed today that she appealed to President Kennedy in 1961 for assistance in making contact with her son in the Soviet Union.

Mrs. Oswald who held a news conference here, said that she went to Washington soon after President Kennedy's inauguration, seeking information about Lee H. Oswald.

She spoke to neither the President nor Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Mrs. Oswald said, but she was referred to a State Department officer who set up a conference for her with other officials.

Three weeks later, she said, she received her son's address from the State Department, the first indication she had had since November, 1959, that he was still alive. Oswald was a Marxist who had defected to the Soviet Union, where he stayed for two and one-half years.

He was arrested last Nov. '62 and charged with the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas. He was shot two days later in the Dallas city jail by Jack Ruby, a night club owner.

Criticizes Court System

During her long and rambling narrative today, Mrs. Oswald was also sharply critical of the New York City juvenile courts system, which she said held truants from school in custody alongside of "hardened criminals."

Mrs. Oswald, a 56-year-old practical nurse, professed faith in her son's innocence throughout the press conference. But she acknowledged that her earlier statement "might" imply that "my son was guilty."

She had complained in interviews during the week that her son, as a defector, should have been kept under surveillance during the President's trip to Dallas.

"It's simple to me," she said, explaining her seeming inconsistency. "Maybe it's not simple to everybody."

Mrs. Oswald said she assumed that her son had psychiatric counseling in New York, although she had no direct knowledge of it.

She brought the boy, then almost 11, to New York in the fall of 1952.

"This is a very, very sad story," she said as she told about his truancy.

"Lee was in the Bronx Zoo when a truant officer picked him up. I found out that New York was different from Texas, that they don't tolerate a day or two out of school. But Lee promised he'd never do it again.

After two more truancies, Mrs. Oswald said, she was notified to appear in Children's Court.

"I hardly knew what was going on," she said. "My boy, right then and there, was taken away. I didn't see my boy again."

She described visiting him shortly afterward in what she referred to as a boys' home in Brooklyn. Oswald was committed by the Children's Court in April, 1953, to the Youth House for Boys, which was then in Manhattan but is now in the Bronx.

"He said to me, 'get me out of here,'" Mrs. Oswald recounted. "I am in here with children who have stabbed people, who have killed people with guns."

"And he had only been picked up for missing school," Mrs. Oswald said unsteadily.

She engaged a lawyer, whose name she did not remember, who told her, she said, that it was prevalent for authorities to want to send your boy to a farm to work to pay for the taxes of the state of New York."

Mrs. Oswald said that her son remained three or four weeks in the institution and then was remanded to her custody by a judge.

Recalls Probation Officer

"That's when Mr. John Carro comes into the picture," she said. "He was a probation officer, and he said, 'Lee, you'll have to report to me every week.'"

"I said, 'Mr. Carro, my son is not going to report to you. He's a criminal. He's given his word that it's not going to happen again. The first time he doesn't keep his word, then he'll report to you.'"

"I was not going to have a boy of that age and that caliber going to a probation officer,"

Mrs. Oswald said. She said that the probation officer was annoyed by her attitude and "certainly made it hard on my son in school—he kept pushing to get him back to the farm."

Later a counselor from the social agency, Big Brother, Inc., whom also she could not identify, advised her to take her son back to New Orleans, she said.

She said she "never had any trouble with Lee" after following this advice.

Records indicate that his school attendance in Louisiana was irregular in the following years, however. He quit school when he was 16 to work as a messenger on the New Orleans

docks and as a runner for a New Orleans dental laboratory.

Before the news conference began, at the Fort Worth Press Club, a telephoned threat on Mrs. Oswald's life was received. Fort Worth policemen escorted her to the press conference and screened reporters but there were no incidents. She had not previously received threatening calls or letters.

Mrs. Oswald dwelt at length on the conditions surrounding her son's discharge from the Marines. She pointed out that he had been classified as unfit only after he defected to Russia. Because his discharge as undesirable was sent to him by registered mail while he was in the Soviet Union, she contended

that he had not actually received such a discharge.

She also raised the question of the assassination rifle, which police investigators say Oswald ordered from a Chicago mail order house.

"The gun he had purchased was in a blanket in the garage in Irving, where his wife was staying," Mrs. Oswald said. "He did not hide it in his Dallas apartment. Anybody had access to that gun, anybody."

Poses 'Logical Story'

Hearing the shots on the day of the assassination, her son had become panic-stricken since he knew that, as a defector, he would be questioned concerning any violence, Mrs. Oswald speculated.

"He goes to get a gun to protect himself," Mrs. Oswald said. "That's not far-fetched to me."

"I'm not saying this is a true story," she said, "only that it's a logical story."

Describing her trip to Washington, Mrs. Oswald said she had borrowed \$120 on her life insurance holdings and had taken an overnight train to the capital.

"I arrived at 8 A.M. and called the White House and asked to speak to President Kennedy," Mrs. Oswald said. She continued:

"A man was very nice to me and said the switchboard wasn't open, but they'd have his office call me. I explained that I had just gotten off the train.

"I freshened up and then I went back on the telephone and asked to speak to Dean Rusk. I spoke to his personal secretary. Everybody was most polite, most helpful.

"She asked that I stay on the line and then she put through a Mr. Boster, who said he remembered my son's case and would make an appointment with me for 11 A.M. [Davis E. Boster, a career Foreign Service of-

ficer now in Mexico City, was in the State Department's Office of Soviet Affairs at this time.]

"I told him I still wanted to see Secretary of State Rusk, but if I couldn't, I'd see him at 11.

Results 'Satisfactory'

"I had arrived at 8 A.M. and by 11 A.M., I was sitting with four high State Department officials. The results were very satisfactory.

"They found his address, I started to write to him and he wrote me beautiful letters from Russia."

Mrs. Oswald was asked if she believed she had failed her son.

"I do not. I have not failed him. The failing was in the human society for not helping a mother with three children." Mrs. Oswald, twice divorced and once widowed, had two sons older than Lee.

Mrs. Oswald said that she would not remove her son's body from its plot in Rose Hill Cemetery here.

Officials of the cemetery have suggested cremation because of threats that have been received against the body and the grave. The Fort Worth police chief has estimated that guards for the grave are costing city taxpayers \$3,000 a month.

"Lee's body will remain exactly where it is," Mrs. Oswald said. "That's final. It will stay if it takes every police officer in the state of Texas to protect it."